"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE EDITION

Today, low clouds, sun, thunderstorms, some heavy, humid, high 87. **Tonight,** showers, storms, low 72. **Tomorrow,** cloudy, thunderstorms, high 82. Weather map, Page B8.

VOL. CLXXII ... No. 59,905 © 2023 The New York Times Company NEW YORK, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2023 $4.00

JOAO SILVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Nyamut Gai, 28, lost two children to disease and hunger as she made the weekslong trip from Sudan back home to South Sudan.

War Drives South Sudanese Back to an Ill-Prepared Homeland

'They Are Coming to Start From Zero,' an Official Says

By ABDI LATIF DAHIR

JODA, South Sudan — Nyamut Gai lost everything four years ago when armed militias stormed through her village in South Sudan, a landlocked African country tormented by civil war, famine and flooding.

Desperate, she and her family fled almost 600 miles north across the border to Sudan, where she worked as a cleaner in the capital, Khartoum, and began to settle in. But then, a fierce war broke out in Sudan in mid-April between rival factions of the military, sending her packing yet again.

As she and her family made the weekslong journey by foot and bus from Khartoum, her 1-month-old son began coughing and withering away from hunger, and soon died. When she finally crossed the border into South Sudan, any sense of relief she felt was shattered when her 3-year-old son succumbed to measles.

"We are not safe anywhere," Ms. Gai, 28, said on a recent morning at a muddy and congested aid center in Renk, a town in South Sudan.

"People fled war here. There's a war in Sudan now. There's war everywhere," she said. "It never ends."

The war in Sudan has set off a mass exodus of people who years ago fled a bloody civil war in South Sudan to seek safety in Sudan. But they are returning home to a country still in the grip of political instability, economic stagnation and a massive humanitarian crisis — many of them without actual homes to return to.

Sudan descended into chaos almost five months ago, when a long-simmering rivalry between the leader of the army, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan, burst into open warfare across the northeast African nation.

In recent weeks, the conflict has intensified in Khartoum and ad-

Continued on Page A8

Bid to Redraw Council's Map Got Ugly Fast

Triumph by Progressive Marred in L.A. Feud

This article is by ***Jill Cowan, Serge F. Kovaleski*** *and* ***Leanne Abraham.***

LOS ANGELES — Nithya Raman turned into a political celebrity almost overnight when she emerged as the face of a rising progressive vanguard to campaign for the Los Angeles City Council in 2020.

With a master's degree in urban planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and experience working with slum dwellers in India, Ms. Raman zeroed in on the city's soaring housing prices and promised to give renters and homeless people a seat at the political table — her seat.

Ms. Raman, 42, wound up receiving more votes than any council member in the city's history and began to draw comparisons to the progressive New York congresswoman, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — "LAOC," one local critic derisively called her.

Barely a year later, though, Ms. Raman ran into an adversary her grass-roots army was powerless to confront: the bruising power politics involved in running a city of 3.8 million people. The City Council had embarked on its once-a-decade redistricting process, and Ms. Raman, who had few allies among the city's old-guard politicians, was threatened at one point with losing virtually all of the constituents who had elected her.

"I've been in politics for 50 years and I've never seen anything like this before in my entire life," said Jackie Goldberg, Ms. Raman's representative on the redistricting commission. "I've never seen a group of people come together and try to disband the City Council district of a woman who got more votes than any of them ever did."

The redistricting battle in Los Angeles underscores how some big city leaders — often Democrats — have used gerrymandering for their political advantage, much the way Republican lawmakers have redrawn legislative lines to secure or expand their control over some statehouses. Similar fights have been waged in Boston, Miami and Chicago.

The conflict in Los Angeles became a national controversy last fall after audio was leaked that revealed the shockingly frank, racist language that politicians used behind closed doors to discuss where to draw district boundaries. Nury Martinez, the former council president, used slurs to describe the young, Black child of a white colleague, as well as Indigenous immigrants from Oaxaca, and was forced to resign.

But the uproar over the recordings obscured the more fundamental impact of Los Angeles's 2021 redistricting process: the degree to which political interfer-

Continued on Page A12

UKRAINE INSISTS CLUSTER ARSENAL KEEPS IT IN FIGHT

BUT CIVILIANS AT RISK

U.S. Arms Help to Offset Shortages, but Aren't 'Magic Wand'

By LARA JAKES and ERIC SCHMITT

ROME — The images of Russian troops retreating from a village in Ukraine under fire leave little doubt of the impact of cluster munitions. Soldiers running from a constellation of at least a dozen explosions around them. An armored vehicle speeding down a road before being hit in a cascade of simultaneous eruptions salting the surrounding ground.

The August drone footage of the Russian withdrawal from the southeastern village of Urozhaine, verified by The New York Times, highlights the power of the weapons. But their use also points to a grim trade-off in the 18-month conflict. By embracing cluster munitions to keep this summer's counteroffensive moving forward, Ukraine and the United States have opened themselves to human rights concerns about their long-term threat to civilians who inadvertently trigger unexploded bombs.

FINBARR O'REILLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Russian bomblets in Ukraine. Both sides use such arms.

Now, two months after the United States shipped an initial tranche of the munitions to Ukraine to ensure its troops did not run out of ammunition, three American officials said the Biden administration is planning to send more, and soon.

One official said the weapons were key to helping Ukraine maintain the momentum its troops just recently gained on the southern front against Russian forces. All three of the officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal discussions.

President Biden's decision this summer to send the munitions to Ukraine, after pleas by President Volodymyr Zelensky, drew widespread condemnation, and even some close American allies were critical.

Continued on Page A6

A Parched City Grips a Lifeline But Can't Use It

By DAVID GELLES

THORNTON, Colo. — Jack Ethredge could see the future. It was 1985, and Mr. Ethredge, then the city manager of Thornton, understood that sooner or later, the Denver suburb would need more water.

UNCHARTED WATERS
A Clash in Colorado

The population was booming, businesses were flocking to the Mountain West, and Thornton had no major lakes or rivers of its own, nor any meaningful amount of groundwater to draw upon, a fluke of geology and geography. The city had drilled a dozen or so wells over the years, but the groundwater's limited supply and high mineral content meant it wasn't fit for drinking.

So at Mr. Ethredge's behest, Thornton went shopping. The City Council bought about 17,000 acres of farmland 60 miles to the north, near Fort Collins, along with the associated water rights. When the time was right, Thornton would divert the water from the Cache la Poudre River that irrigated that farmland, put it in a pipeline and send it downstate.

"In the water business you have to be years and years ahead of the game," Mr. Ethredge, now retired, said in an interview.

In theory, Thornton's water woes were solved. In practice, the problems were just beginning. To-

Continued on Page A18

GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ecuavoley has Andean roots dating to the 19th century. "It is in my blood," one Queens resident said.

Near the U.S. Open, a Parallel Sporting Universe

A Game From Ecuador Captures the Heart of a Community

By DAVID WALDSTEIN

Each summer, Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens hosts one of the most distinct, continually functioning sporting events in New York City. It features hundreds of players hitting balls, delicious food on offer and spectators sipping drinks while soaking in the entertainment. And on the other side of a fence, there is also a tennis tournament.

For virtually as long as the U.S. Open has been held at its current site, families, mostly immigrants from Ecuador, have made the surrounding parkland and parking lots home to their own kind of championships.

Their game is known to many as ecuavoley, a brand of three-a-side volleyball believed to have originated in Ecuador, where many consider it a national sport alongside soccer. It is also one of the primary activities in this corner of New York.

"This is my game," Miguel Tenecela, 41, an electrician from Corona, Queens, said between games. "It is in my blood."

Because of its diversity, Queens is sometimes called the world's borough, but some areas enjoy a pronounced Ecuadorean flavor. Some estimate the number of people in Queens originally from the Andean country at well over 100,000, with many concentrated in Corona, the neighborhood just west of the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. As it is with the U.S. Open, the park is where they showcase their favored sport.

Last weekend, Tenecela and many of his friends and family members gathered, as they often do, for hours of ecuavoley, also called voley or boley, a game with Andean roots dating to the 19th century. On Friday, Yarina's "Rosalia-Ecuador" pumped from a

Continued on Page A17

For Mattel, Success of 'Barbie' Goes Far Beyond the Big Screen

By JAMES B. STEWART

When Ynon Kreiz arrived at Mattel in April 2018, the newly installed chief executive had one mantra when it came to a feature film starring Barbie, a project he really wanted to get off the ground: He didn't care if the movie sold a single additional doll.

But "Barbie" the film had to be good and a cultural event. It had to be different. It had to break molds.

And if that meant turning the chief executive of Mattel — i.e., himself — into the object of comic ridicule in the portrayal of the chief executive character in the film ("vain and foolish to the nth degree," as The Guardian put it), then so be it.

That approach has paid off to a degree that even Mr. Kreiz could hardly have believed possible. "Barbie" is close to grossing $1.4 billion and passed one of the "Harry Potter" movies as the top-grossing Warner Bros. film of all time. It could end up near the $2 billion mark. (The record-holder is 2009's "Avatar," at $2.9 billion.)

How Mattel pulled off a feat that had eluded the company for years

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BUSINESS B1-5

China Floods World With Cars
Even as China's other exports falter, its carmakers are seeing considerable increases in overseas sales. PAGE B1

$500 Million to Aid Local News
Philanthropies focus attention on newsrooms as concern grows over the closure of smaller outlets. PAGE B1

NATIONAL A11-21

Florida Law Hinders Cleanup
Migrants who once flocked to the state after hurricanes to help rebuild said they would stay away this year because of its new immigration law. PAGE A11

A Medicare Mystery
Instead of growing, as this giant federal program always has, spending per beneficiary has nearly leveled over a decade. No one knows why. PAGE A14

Guilty of Ignoring Subpoena
The verdict makes Peter Navarro the second adviser to President Donald J. Trump to be convicted for defying the Jan. 6 panel's summons. PAGE A21

WEEKEND ARTS C1-12

Messages Are His Medium
A new exhibition looks at Ed Ruscha's use of language and images. Above, "The Back of Hollywood" from 1977. PAGE C1

Confessions of a Drag Legend
The memoir by Charles Busch explores the ascent of a man who is exceptionally good at playing women. PAGE C1

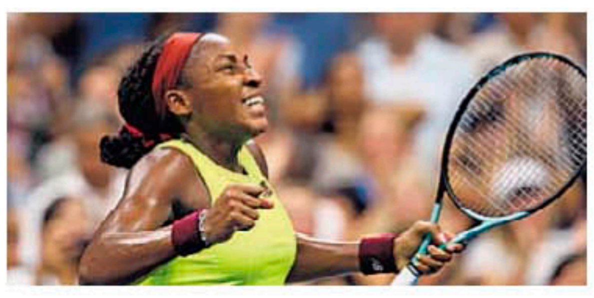
INTERNATIONAL A4-10

India's Global Ambitions
The country's hosting of the G20 summit this weekend will put its growing power on display. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's divisive religious politics threaten its rise. PAGE A4

Villages in Greece Submerged
Military forces were called in to rescue residents after heavy rains overnight added to major flooding in central Greece. The number of weather-related deaths is likely to rise. PAGE A9

OPINION A22-23

Pamela Paul PAGE A23



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Gauff Reaches U.S. Open Final
Coco Gauff, 19, became the youngest American in the Open final since Serena Williams in 2001, sealing a win after a delay caused by a protest. PAGE B9

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The New York Times

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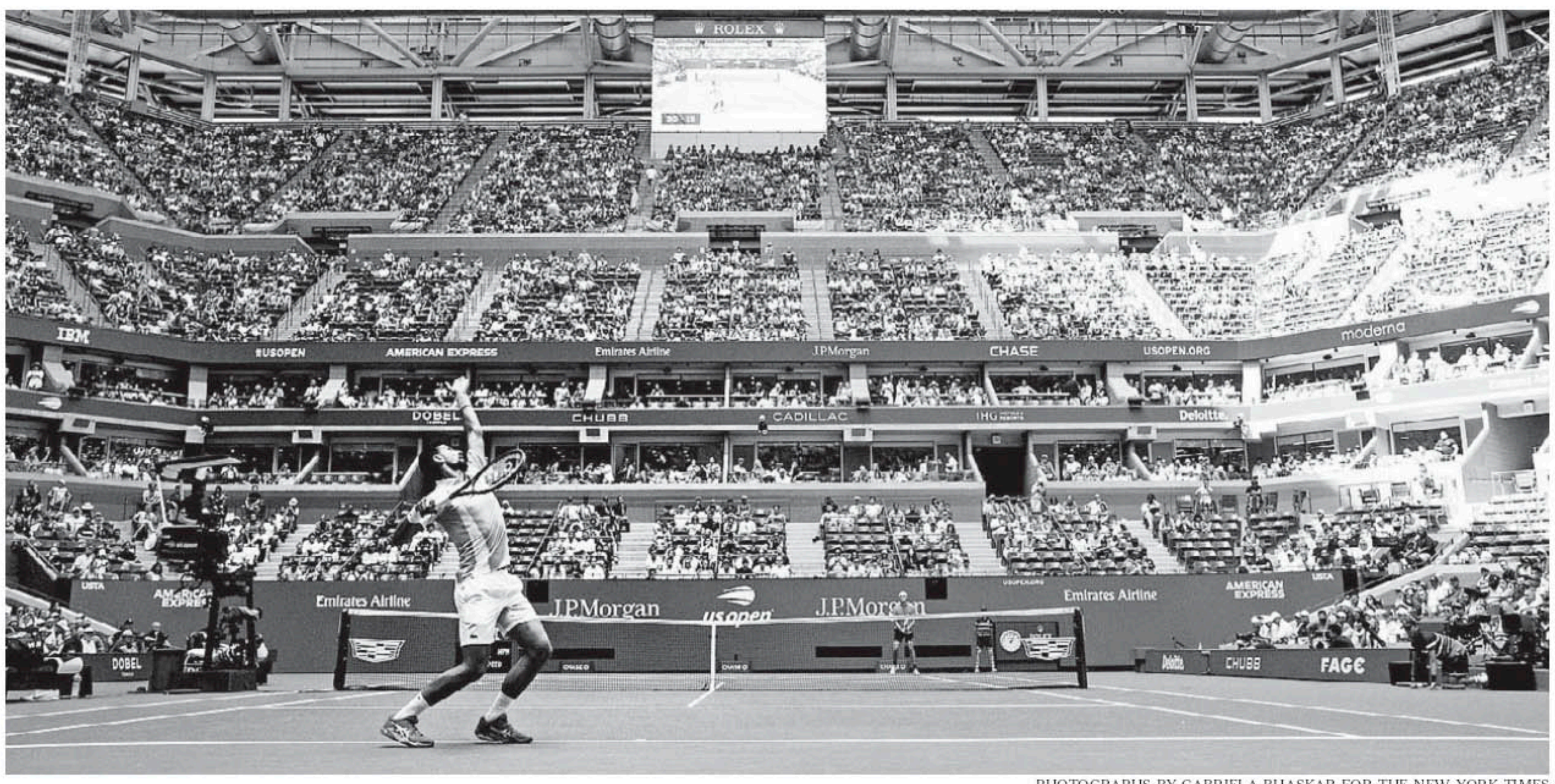

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Novak Djokovic served to Taylor Fritz in the men's singles quarterfinal round of the U.S. Open in New York on Tuesday. Djokovic won the match.

At the U.S. Open, a Reporter on Familiar Grounds

By MATTHEW FUTTERMAN
Matthew Futterman is a Sports reporter for The New York Times. He attended his first U.S. Open tournament in 1978.

As a reporter who covers tennis for The New York Times, I am often asked which of the four Grand Slam tournaments — the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon or the U.S. Open — is my favorite.

I admit I'm biased, as I've lived in New York most of my life. But my answer has never wavered: the U.S. Open.

I've been coming to the tournament since 1978; I was a 9-year-old tennis-head who grew up in Westchester County during the American tennis boom. The tournament had just moved from the West Side Tennis Club at Forest Hills to what is now the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

I remember scant details about that first tournament. My parents took my two brothers and me. We sat way up in the red bleachers of Louis Armstrong Stadium, the venue's main arena. It was hot and breezy, as it often is when you're a stone's throw from Flushing Bay. Roscoe Tanner was playing. He could serve the ball 150 miles an hour in spite of racket technology that is now considered ancient.

The coolest thing about that stadium, which was later renovated, and then torn down and replaced, was that if you climbed to the top of the bleachers, you could lean over a railing and watch the action on the Grandstand court about 150 feet below. It seemed incredibly unsafe. But it was also awesome in the way that so much of New York in the 1970s and '80s was — it felt dangerous and wonderful all at once.

One year, my brother and I snagged seats a few rows up from the court on the Grandstand and watched Vitas Gerulaitis win an epic match in an early round. Gerulaitis, who died of carbon monoxide poisoning in 1994, was one of the great New Yorkers, a Long Island boy with shoulder-length blond curly hair. The little bandbox of a stadium was teeming with fans screaming their lungs out for him.

Like Gerulaitis, John McEnroe, another tennis great, grew up playing at the Port Washington Tennis Academy on Long

Matthew Futterman at the U.S. Open.

Island. I knew people who knew them. An older cousin used to tell me stories of leaving Studio 54 at 2 a.m., just as Gerulaitis and his posse, which sometimes included Bjorn Borg, entered the club. New York felt like the center of the tennis universe.

In my 30s, I became a sportswriter and eventually a specialist who mostly covers tennis and the Olympics. Most people think I have one of the world's greatest jobs. They're not wrong. I typically spend about three months a year on the road, covering the major tennis tournaments and a handful of other sporting events. The two weeks when I get to sleep in my own bed in Manhattan and cover the U.S. Open are extra special.

All the Grand Slams are great in their own ways, with many wonderful people, including new and longtime volunteers, who make them possible.

I'm not sure any nation's fans relish sport as much as the Aussies. The French Open has those beautiful red clay courts. Wimbledon has the tradition, but there is also the Royal Box, where princes and queens sit. But monarchies aren't really my thing.

The U.S. Open is how I think tennis should be: welcoming, with limited emphasis on staid decorum. The tournament is largely removed from its reputation as an elitist sport for the rich.

We have Billie Jean King, Arthur Ashe, the Williams Sisters, Frances Tiafoe, Coco Gauff and many others to thank for that. It also helps that the country's signature tennis event happens in a public park, rather than a private club.

The stadiums aren't hallowed grounds but utilitarian concrete boxes. Yes, there are some fancier, corporate enclaves and very pricey cocktails, but there is a lot about the space that signals inclusion; the complex is named for King, a woman who proudly identifies as lesbian, and its main stadium honors Ashe, a Black man and civil rights activist. Look around the grounds on a busy day and the place somewhat resembles the city that hosts it.

Shortly after the tournament ends, you can reserve a time and play with your buddies on those same courts. I've hit plenty of balls there. I've watched one of my kids practice and play matches there. Try doing that at the All England Club.

This year's tournament is steaming toward the finish. So many of the big names have played deep into the tournament: Djokovic. Alcaraz. Gauff. I will be in the lower bowl, about 10 rows up from the court, for the men's and women's finals — two of my favorite days of the year — though the other 12 days of the tournament are sometimes even better.

Shortly after the tournament ends, I will be shifting to The Athletic, the sports website that The Times owns, which will take over the traditional sports coverage for the company this month.

I don't know how many years I've attended the Open since 1978. Most would be a very safe bet, including in 2020, after New York had become a hot spot for the coronavirus, when I was one of a tiny handful of journalists permitted on site for the Open. It was like reporting from the surface of the moon.

Thankfully, at The Athletic, I'll continue to do what I do, including, of course, covering those other Slams and the U.S. Open every year, chasing the stories of agony and ecstasy that this beautiful and cruel sport always produces.

Tennis, anyone?

Read Mr. Futterman's coverage of the U.S. Open at nytimes.com/by/matthew-futterman.

The Newspaper and Beyond

TODAY'S PAPER

Corrections	A21	Opinion	A22-23
Crossword	C12	Weather	B8
Obituaries	B10	Classified Ads	B4

VIDEO On "Popcast (Deluxe)," the weekly culture roundup show on YouTube, The Times's Jon Caramanica and Joe Coscarelli discussed the queer teen horror-comedy film "Bottoms" and the summer in reality TV. *nytimes.com/popcast*

T LIST Find out what the T Magazine team recommends this week, including a new Mexican shop that sells a wild array of home goods, a farm-to-table pub in the Cotswolds and horse-themed tableware. *tmagazine.com*

INTERACTIVE In an installment of the "Can America Age Gracefully?" series from Times Opinion, hear seniors describe the obstacles they face navigating cities, such as cracked sidewalks, dangerous crosswalks and inaccessible public transportation. *nytimes.com/opinion*

Quote of the Day

"We lost everything we owned. The only saving grace was those guys who came to my house."

MICHAEL BURNETT, *referring to four undocumented men he hired to help him sort through his Crystal River, Fla., home after Hurricane Idalia inundated it with storm water and sewage from burst pipes. The men are part of an immigrant work force that in recent years has helped communities in Florida and other states clean up and rebuild after climate disasters. Page A11.*

Today's Top Trending Headlines

With an Escaped Killer Loose, an Unsettling Encounter in a Darkened House The manhunt for a fugitive who escaped a Pennsylvania prison a week ago continued on Thursday. Fear and unease have settled over the community near Philadelphia where he escaped and is believed to be hiding. Campbell Robertson reported from Bethesda, Md., and Joel Wolfram reported from Pocopson Township, Pa.

Fatality Draws Scrutiny to Spicy 'One Chip Challenge' Product A 14-year-old in Worcester, Mass., died after he ate a Paqui brand chip dusted with two of the world's hottest peppers, his mother said. Paqui's "One Chip Challenge," which dares customers to wait as long as possible after eating the chip before eating or drinking, has been criticized for making people sick. This is the first time someone has linked the challenge to a fatality, Rebecca Carballo and Remy Tumin wrote.

Florida Expected to Approve Classical Exam as a Competitor To the SAT Dana Goldstein reported that Florida's public university system may become the first in the country to approve the Classic Learning Test, or CLT, for use in admissions. The test is known for its emphasis on Western canon and Christian thought. The decision is the latest move by Gov. Ron DeSantis to shake up the state's school system.

Toyota, a Hybrid Pioneer, Struggles to Master Electric Vehicles Toyota has been slow to sell all-electric cars, alienating some customers and hurting sales. "The stage of the battle has changed," said an industry expert of the race for automakers to create E.V.s. "The Japanese auto industry in particular has been very slow to act."

A Headline From History

TYPICAL AMERICAN SUPERMARKET IS THE HIT OF FAIR IN YUGOSLAVIA

September 8, 1957. "A typical American neighborhood supermarket, the first ever shown in a Communist country, was the rage of Zagreb today," The Times reported from the opening day of the Zagreb International Trade Fair in Yugoslavia. The so-called Supermarket USA was a functioning replica store arranged by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Association of Food Chains, a grocery trade group, and stocked with U.S. produce to exhibit the abundance of capitalism during the Cold War. Shoppers were impressed by individually packaged and prepriced meat, The Times reported. "Here one can see the strength of the American soil, the influence of men over nature," said one patron about the "crisp green vegetables." President Josip Broz Tito visited and called it a "beautiful building."

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Facts of Interest

More than 20 percent of Americans live in news deserts, which are areas that have little or no independent news sources on local issues, or communities that are on the verge of becoming one, according to a 2022 report.

Nonprofits Seek to Stem News Crisis B1

In a poll this summer, over half of 1,000 undocumented immigrants said they didn't plan to return to Florida this hurricane season to help in cleanup efforts because of the state's new immigration law.

Florida's Immigration Law May Affect Hurricane Cleanup A11

With more than 200 works, the exhibit "Ed Ruscha / Now Then," which opens on Sunday at the Museum of Modern Art, is the largest retrospective of the artist Ed Ruscha's six-decade career and spans the entire top floor of the museum.

Art's Deadpan Laureate C1

Since 2004, students in France have not been able to wear "ostentatious" symbols that have a clear religious meaning, like Catholic crosses, Jewish skullcaps or Muslim head scarves, in middle and high schools.

French Court Upholds Ban of Abayas In Schools A10

China's car industry has quadrupled exports in three years, surpassing Japan in 2023 as the world leader. This year, the exports of Chinese cars surged 86 percent through July.

A Fresh Fleet of Ships to Move A Glut of Cars B1

Unlike other wavelengths of light, cosmic X-rays can only be detected from above Earth's atmosphere, which shields us from the harmful radiation.

Japan Joins the New Moon Race, And Launches an X-Ray Telescope A9

The Mini Crossword

1	2	3	4	■
5				6
7				
8				
■	9			

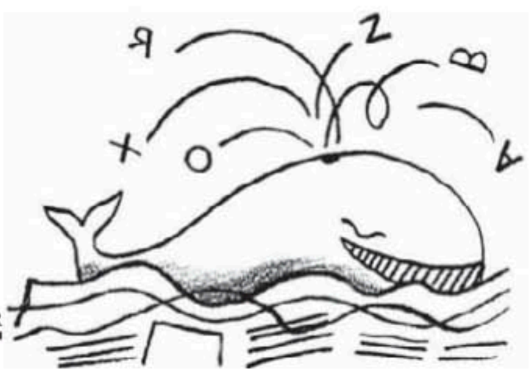
9/8/2023 BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS
1 Mind/body exercise
5 Really love
7 "OK, understood"
8 Work hard
9 Not request another card, in blackjack

DOWN
1 The white side of this symbol: ☯
2 Emanations from trash cans
3 "OK, understood"
4 Many a basketball stadium
6 Swirling water

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

■	■	T	W	O
E	R	R	O	R
D	I	A	N	E
G	R	I	T	S
Y	I	N	■	■



CHARLOTTE DUMORTIER

Reader Corner

From the Comments Forum

ROB O'NEAL/FLORIDA KEYS NEWS BUREAU, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jimmy Buffett built a business empire around his 1977 breakthrough hit, "Margaritaville."

Yesterday's Reader Corner featured a selection of comments on the Times obituary for Jimmy Buffett, who died last week at age 76. In it, Bill Friskics-Warren wrote that Mr. Buffett's "roguish brand of island escapism" made him a kind of folk hero among his devoted fans, the so-called Parrot Heads. Here are a few more edited comments.

When I was in Key West, I stopped into Jimmy's Margaritaville restaurant one evening and took a seat at the bar. Suddenly, a blond man walks in and says, "I am here to sing a few songs." It was Jimmy Buffett himself! He gave quite the show. Listening to Jimmy sing "Magaritaville" in Margaritaville was quite the gift. R.I.P. Jimmy Buffett! You gave joy to millions.
— JOHN GALLETTA JR., ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA.

I found one of his albums in a bargain bin record store, marked down so much I couldn't not buy it, back in the college days. It was a cassette, and my player wouldn't rewind correctly so I was "forced" to listen to the whole album to get back to the start. During the process, I became a Parrot Head.
— CHRISTY DEDMAN, GRUBBS, ARK.

Jimmy performed several times at my alma mater in Southampton, N.Y., to raise money for our financially struggling marine science school. Although he always drew a huge crowd of Parrot Heads, our school couldn't be saved and closed by the end of the '90s. Singing for lost causes, barflies and all sorts of social misfits was in Jimmy's blood. He was a true mensch with a knack for making a buck.
— VERNON RAIL, SOUTHPORT, MAINE

Listen In

Excerpts From New York Times Audio

A group of tech billionaires is buying up farmland north of San Francisco with aspirations to develop a new city, alleviate the Bay Area's housing crisis and promote innovation. On "Hard Fork," a technology podcast from The New York Times, the hosts Kevin Roose and Casey Newton discussed why the reinvention plan may ultimately prove to be a safe investment. Read an edited excerpt from their conversation.

KEVIN ROOSE This is still a very early-stage project. They have not broken ground on new construction yet. A lot of what they have bought is described as a kind of checkerboard of plots. They're offering people money for their farms. Casey, what do you make of this?

CASEY NEWTON There's a lot that we still don't know. I suppose I could learn things about this project that make me very concerned. But at the end of the day, we do have a housing crisis in this country. In the Bay Area, in particular, it's very acute. And while we have tried many, many things to fix that problem, it still isn't much easier to build a house today than it was 10 years ago.

Of all of the things that these billionaires could be choosing to spend their time and money on, building a bunch of houses in an undeveloped area within a relatively short drive of San Francisco seems like it could be a really good use of their time to me.

ROOSE Yeah, it doesn't feel like a risky bet. In the best-case scenario, where all of your plans involve buying up this farmland and rezoning it and building houses, businesses, commercial districts and a new walkable city, then you own a city and all of the infrastructure around it and can profit from that. Even in the worst-case scenario, where these guys end up not being able to build a whole new city from scratch, they still own a ton of land in Northern California, which, historically, has been a pretty good investment.

Listen to the episode at nytimes.com/hardfork.

Here to Help

A Recipe for Crispy Gnocchi With Tomato and Red Onion

Inspired by panzanella, the Tuscan bread salad, this dish swaps stale bread for pan-fried gnocchi. The plump, crusty dumplings do a good job at soaking up the combination of tomatoes, balsamic vinegar and olive oil, while still keeping their crisp edges. Shelf-stable gnocchi work best, but you could use frozen gnocchi, taking extra care not to move them around too much in the pan so they don't break apart. Top with a sharp cheese such as Parmesan, pecorino or ricotta salata, if you like. This meal is best eaten immediately while the gnocchi remains crispy, but it can sit for up to 30 minutes. **HETTY LUI MCKINNON**

TIME: 20 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

- 5 to 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 (17-ounce) package shelf-stable (or frozen) potato gnocchi
- 1½ pounds tomatoes (any variety)
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal) and black pepper
- Handful of chopped parsley, plus more for serving
- Handful of torn basil, plus more for serving

1. Heat a large (about 12-inch), well-seasoned cast-iron or nonstick skillet over medium-high; add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the gnocchi to the pan, breaking up any that are stuck together. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes, tossing every 1½ to 2 minutes so they get golden and crispy all over.

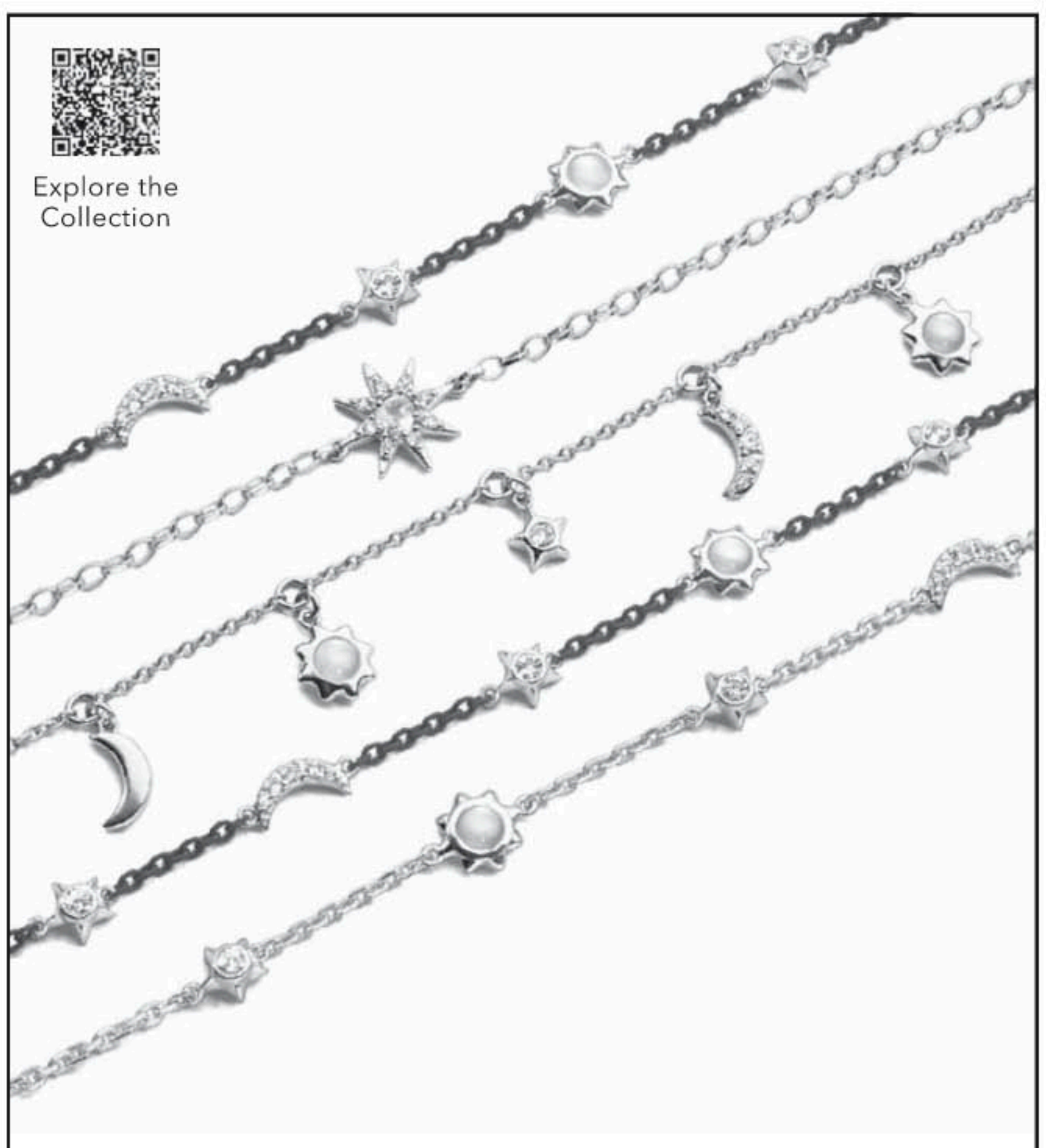
2. Prepare the tomatoes: If you are using small ones like the cherry or grape varieties, simply slice them in half. For larger tomatoes, quarter them or slice into bite-size chunks. (It is good to have a mix of shapes and sizes.) Place the tomatoes and onions in a large serving bowl. Add the balsamic vinegar and 1 teaspoon salt; season with pepper and gently toss.

MARK WEINBERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
FOOD STYLING BY BARRETT WASHBURNE

3. When the gnocchi are golden and crispy, add them to the tomatoes, along with 3 to 4 tablespoons of olive oil and a handful each of parsley and basil. Toss and taste, adding more salt or pepper as needed.

4. Top with more parsley and basil and eat immediately or at room temperature.

For more recipes, visit New York Times Cooking at nytcooking.com.



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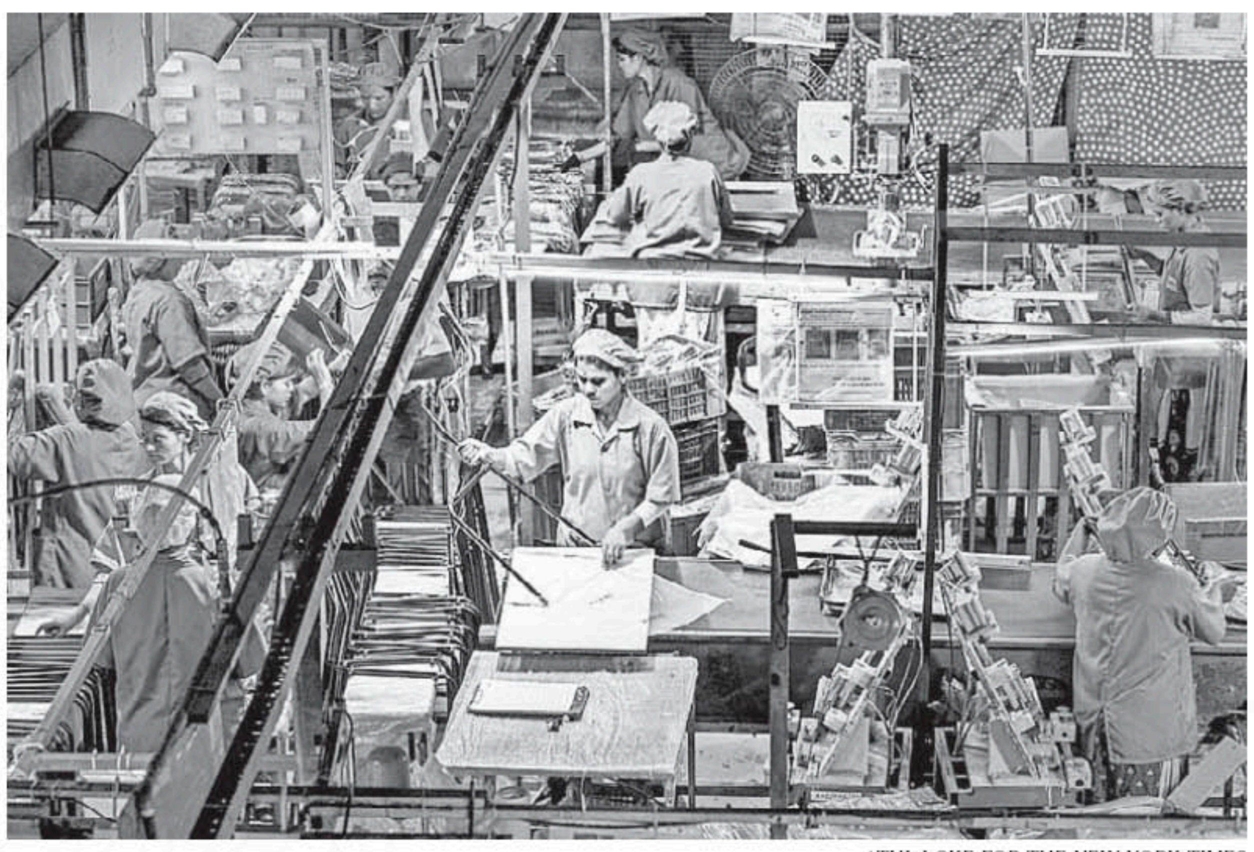

ATUL LOKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JOSEPH CAMPBELL/REUTERS

Clockwise from top: Rubble marks the site of deadly religious violence in Nuh, India, last month; Muslims leaving a mosque in the old quarters of Delhi; a factory making modular furniture for export in Aurangabad. Many citizens are waiting for India's rising prosperity to reach them, and non-Hindus feel marginalized.

Deepening Chasms Threaten India's Mounting Ambitions

By MUJIB MASHAL and HARI KUMAR

NUH, India — Inside a sprawling golf resort south of New Delhi, diplomats were busy making final preparations for a fast-approaching global summit meeting. The road outside was freshly smoothed and dotted with police officers. Posters emblazoned with the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi bore the slogan he had chosen for the occasion: One Earth, One Family, One Future.

Not far away, however, were the remnants of bitter division: grieving families, charred vehicles and the rubble of bulldozed shops and homes. Weeks before, deadly religious violence had erupted in the Nuh district, the site of the resort. The internet was shut down, and thousands of troops were rushed in. Clashes quickly spread to the gates of Gurugram, a tech start-up hub just outside New Delhi that India bills as a city of the future.

JAGADEESH NV/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working to reshape India into a Hindu state.

These scenes sum up India's contradictions as it basks in its moment this weekend as host of the Group of 20: Its momentum toward a bigger role in a chaotic world order is built on increasingly combustible and unequal ground at home.

Mr. Modi, India's most powerful leader in decades, is attempting nothing less than a legacy-defining transformation of this nation of 1.4 billion people.

On the one hand, he is trying to turn India into a developed nation and a guiding light for the voiceless in a Western-dominated world. The country, now the world's most populous, is the fastest-growing major economy, adept digitally and awash in eager young workers. It is also a rising diplomatic power that is seeking to capitalize on the frictions of the superpower competition between the United States and China.

On the other hand, Mr. Modi is deepening fault lines in Indian society with an intensifying campaign to reshape a vastly diverse country, held together delicately by a secular constitution, into a Hindu state. His party's efforts to rally and elevate Hindus — both a lifelong ideological project and a potent lure for votes — have marginalized hundreds of millions of Muslims and other minorities as second-class citizens.

The question for India, as Mr. Modi seems poised to extend his decade-long rule in an election early next year, is how much the instability caused by his religious nationalism will hinder his economic ambitions.

The sectarian clashes in Muslim-majority Nuh were sparked by a religious march held by a right-wing Hindu organization that falls under the same Hindu-nationalist umbrella as Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, or B.J.P.

They were only the latest flare-up in what has become a seemingly constant state of tensions.

Emboldened right-wing vigilantes and the aggressively Hindu-first messaging of B.J.P. politicians have left the country's Muslims and Christians in a perpetual state of fear and alienation.

The northeastern state of Manipur, where its top leader has employed the B.J.P.'s majoritarian playbook, has been burning in ethnic conflict for months, with about 200 people killed and regions effectively partitioned along ethnic lines.

In the restive Muslim-majority region of Kashmir, the government has suspended democracy for four years and is responding to any grievance with a tightening crackdown.

Asked whether his government had discriminated against religious minorities, Mr. Modi said during a state visit to Washington in June that there was no discrimination in India under its democratic values.

"We have always proved that democracy can deliver," he said during a news conference with President Biden. "And when I say deliver, this is regardless of caste, creed, religion, gender. There's absolutely no space for discrimination."

Yet B.J.P. politicians continue their divisive rhetoric even when Mr. Modi is on the global stage. In 2020, for example, as Mr. Modi and President Donald J. Trump were addressing a stadium in the prime minister's home state of Gujarat, large swaths of New Delhi were engulfed in deadly violence that had been incited in part by B.J.P. leaders.

Gurcharan Das, an intellectual who supported Mr. Modi during his first term for his promise to focus on development, said he had grown disenchanted as the damage of the ruling party's Hindu nationalism overshadowed its economic progress.

In a public lecture this week, he said that although Mr. Modi's government had failed to deliver the jobs he had promised, it had still taken up key reforms, from streamlining taxes to help unify the Indian market, to ushering in a digital revolution that has brought more people into the formal economy.

But he said he saw danger as the B.J.P. rejected pluralism as the appeasement of

Hosting a G20 summit while divisive religious politics roil the country.

minorities. He repeated a warning that has become frequent: that India is on a path of religious fundamentalism similar to what has plunged neighboring Pakistan into catastrophe.

"While dreaming of a grand civilizational state, Hindu nationalists are in fact trying to create a narrow-minded, identity-based, 19th-century European nation-state — a sort of Hindu Pakistan," he said.

As India's economic growth largely enriches those at the top, the masses are still waiting for their promised prosperity. While India is now the world's fifth-largest economy, ahead of Britain and France, its average income — a key indicator of living standard — remains in the world's bottom third, next to countries like Congo.

Mr. Modi, in a recent interview with the Press Trust of India, said that the country would be a developed nation when it marks 100 years of independence in 2047. But with that promise still far away, he has filled the gap with the politics of polarization.

Ajai Sahni, the director of the Institute for Conflict Management in New Delhi, said that what distinguished the recent violence in India from its long history of far bloodier sectarian clashes was the attitude of the government.

"The state always notionally distanced itself from such violence. There was always a reaffirmation, at least verbally, of the constitutional order and the secular order," Mr. Sahni said. Under Mr. Modi, "there is clear, shall we say, evidence of state support or endorsement for extremist positions."

"The violence is still episodic," he added. "One killing here, two killings there, then a certain flare-up," he said. "But the threat is sustained." He attributed much of that to the "virality" around violence now — social media is "harnessed" to spread a local episode nationally, to chilling effect.

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, India's state minister for electronics and technology, said the government was trying to tackle potential "misinformation and incitement" online as it intensifies its digital efforts.

In the case of the Nuh violence, online threats and counter-threats in the days before the march made clear the possibility of an imminent spiral, which residents said the police ignored. The Muslim side was also armed and ready to clash when the Hindu marchers arrived.

Five of the six people killed were Hindus, a mix of day laborers who appeared to be caught in the violence and members of the right-wing group. The minority Hindu residents are now vulnerable in a district where they said they had survived without trouble through even the worst phases of India's earlier sectarian tensions.

The government, after its initial lax response, responded to the clashes with full force, in what has become an extrajudicial pattern of punishment. Bulldozers were wheeled in to raze homes and shops — mostly those of Muslims — without due process and with the visuals transmitted across the country.

The economic ramifications of the clashes were immediate, and palpable even a month later.

As the violence spread to Gurugram, many offices quickly had employees work from home. Executives at companies in the city told of a fearfulness they had never experienced before.

About 500 families, both Hindus and Muslims, had settled in the shadow of the Gurugram skyscrapers seeking a better life. Now, a majority of the Muslims have left.

"It's fear," said Sourav Kumar, who works as a security guard.

Suhasini Raj contributed reporting.

Agency in Japan Admits Founder Preyed on Boys Since the 1970s

By HISAKO UENO and BEN DOOLEY

The president of one of Japan's most influential entertainment agencies resigned after an independent investigation confirmed the company's founder, Johnny Kitagawa, had sexually abused young men in his care since the 1970s.

Allegations against Mr. Kitagawa, who helped aspirants achieve pop stardom in Japan, have circulated for decades, but were largely ignored by a quiescent media that had become dependent on the entertainment mogul and his family-run company, Johnny & Associates, to provide access to the young performers. His reputation as a hitmaker associated with some of Japan's most popular boy bands protected Mr. Kitagawa from scandal, even after his death in 2019 at age 87.

The release of an hourlong BBC documentary in March featuring interviews with three of Mr. Kitagawa's accusers opened a floodgate of recrimination, prompting more men to come forward and putting pressure on the company to respond. Under immense scrutiny, Johnny & Associates announced in May that it was forming an internal investigative panel to "prevent the recurrence" of future abuse.

At a news conference on Thursday, Julie Keiko Fujishima, Mr. Kitagawa's niece, acknowledged the results of the investigation and apologized on behalf of herself and the company. She also announced she had resigned as the company's president on Wednesday.

"These problems were caused by my uncle, and, as his niece, I want to take responsibility for them," she said, adding that the company would seek to offer support and compensation to accusers. (Ms. Fujishima, the company's sole owner, will remain as a board member, responsible solely for relief and compensation.)

The report, released in late August, confirmed hundreds of cases of abuse by Mr. Kitagawa going back more than 50 years. It cited a lack of corporate governance at the company and media complicity as major factors in his impunity. Mr. Kitagawa's sister, Mary, who died in 2021, also played a role in covering up his behavior and protecting him from the consequences, the report concluded.

No criminal charges were ever filed against Mr. Kitagawa, who consistently denied the accusations against him.

Ms. Fujishima, who has served on the company's board since 1998 and was appointed president in 2019, said that she had no direct knowledge of Mr. Kitagawa's behavior and had little personal interaction with performers represented by the agency before his death.

She had been aware of allegations against him, she said, but at the time "couldn't imagine taking any action."

Ms. Fujishima will be replaced by Noriyuki Higashiyama, a singer who rose to fame under the auspices of Johnny & Associates and later became a successful actor and news anchor.

Mr. Higashiyama said that he had not been sexually abused by Mr. Kitagawa and had not known that it was happening to others, although he had heard rumors. In comments on Thursday, he pledged to reform the company.

"I believed Mr. Kitagawa," he said, describing the mogul as a father figure.

Speaking at a parallel news conference, Kazuya Nakamura, who has accused Mr. Kitagawa of abusing him while he was an aspiring performer, said that the company's admission of guilt "felt like a dream."

But he questioned the company's sincerity and suggested that appointing Mr. Higashiyama, who was one of Mr. Kitagawa's top stars during the time of the abuse, made it difficult to believe that the company was committed to change.

Some of Mr. Kitagawa's accusers have said that they are considering filing civil and criminal complaints against the company in Japan and civil suits overseas, where they have alleged some of the abuse occurred.

In his heyday, Mr. Kitagawa was regarded as the king of Japanese boy bands, creating more than a dozen power groups that dominated the J-Pop music scene. Boys as young as 9 were recruited by Mr. Kitagawa and lived together in a dormitory, where they were trained to sing, dance and conduct themselves like pop idols.

The company continues to manage some of Japan's most popular musical acts, with considerable influence and power in the entertainment industry. It will keep its name for now, Mr. Higashiyama said Thursday.

Rumors about Mr. Kitagawa's behavior first came to public attention in 1999, when the weekly tabloid Shukan Bunshun wrote about the experiences of several anonymous men. But other news outlets largely ignored the story, and Mr. Kitagawa won a libel suit against Shukan Bunshun's publisher. Damages of 8.8 million yen (about $60,000) were later reduced on appeal.

War in Ukraine

Ukraine Insists Cluster Munitions From U.S. Keep It in the Fight

From Page A1

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

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IVOR PRICKETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clockwise from above: a Ukrainian soldier firing the type of howitzer used for cluster arms; a dug-in Russian position abandoned last fall; President Biden, whose cluster arms aid was condemned.

Both Russia and Ukraine used the bomblets during the war well before the American shipment arrived in mid-July, but with a crucial distinction. Russia has used them against a country it has invaded, where its forces have not hesitated to wreak indiscriminate destruction, while Ukraine has used them on its own soil, weighing the costs to its own people.

Cluster munitions have been banned by more than 100 countries because of their devastating effects, sometimes years later, on children and other civilians who mistakenly disturb and detonate unexploded rounds.

Some Ukrainian troops said U.S.-supplied cluster munitions have been a powerful addition to a slew of weapons the West has sent for the counteroffensive, and a necessary substitute for their dwindling stocks of 155-millimeter artillery shells.

"They are super efficient," said one Ukrainian marine, who participated in the successful fight for Urozhaine and identified himself only as Serhiy. "When our guys see how we use them against the enemy, their spirits soar."

But other Ukrainian soldiers are more measured, saying that cluster munitions are used mostly in situations where enemy infantry are exposed and that they are largely ineffective against the dug-in Russian positions — line after line of trenches and bunkers — that are the major obstacle to the counteroffensive.

Western officials and experts agree that cluster munitions — multiple bomblets packed in shells that disperse over a wide area before impact — are most effective against forces and vehicle convoys that are spread out over open terrain. Because the bomblets leave the shells in a scattershot way, it is hard to direct them at precise targets.

So far, American officials said, they have been used to strike concentrations of Russian troops, artillery systems, air defenses, ammunition depots, radar stations and vehicles.

"What we have seen from Ukrainian reporting is that they are having good effect with this capability," Laura K. Cooper, a U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia policy, said in a recent interview.

U.S. officials will not say how many cluster munitions were included in the first shipment, out of the hundreds of thousands that the Pentagon has available.

The American-supplied cluster munitions are fired from 155-millimeter howitzers, with a range of about 15 miles. Some military experts are now pushing for cluster munitions that can be launched from rocket systems and hit targets dozens of miles away.

With NATO states' stockpiles of other ammunition to donate running alarmingly low, and with weapons manufacturers in the United States and Europe unable to keep up, experts said cluster munitions may be one of the few available means to refill Ukraine's supply.

Ukraine's voracious demand for ammunition is expected to rise as some units increasingly rely on heavy artillery to lay the ground for infantry advances instead of NATO-style combined arms warfare that Ukrainian units have struggled to master.

U.S. officials have estimated that Ukrainian forces were recently firing as many as 8,000 artillery rounds each day, including hundreds of cluster munitions.

Taken together, that could cause cluster munitions to become what George Barros at the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, predicted could be a "permanent fixture within the Ukrainian arsenal."

That is especially worrisome to those who object to any cluster munitions being given to Ukraine, no matter who uses them, or how.

"What we've seen is that Ukraine is keen to show that there is military utility to cluster munitions," said Mary Wareham, advocacy director of the arms division at Human Rights Watch. "But at the end of the day, these weapons are prohibited because of the harm inflicted on civilians both when they're used and decades after."

But without them, Ukraine's leaders counter, they cannot match Russian firepower.

"I want to look at this from a perspective of fairness," Mr. Zelensky said in July at the annual NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. "Russia's constantly using cluster munitions on our territory, and they're fighting only on our land. They're killing our people."

The strategic problem is that in the counteroffensive, Ukraine is fighting dug-in defenders, where cluster munitions "have their limits," said Can Kasapoglu, director of defense research at the independent Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies in Istanbul. They may succeed when used with other kinds of artillery,

A potent weapon against exposed, not entrenched, troops.

but alone, "they're not a magic wand," Mr. Kasapoglu said.

Gian Luca Capovin and Alexander Stronell, analysts with the British security intelligence firm Janes said in August that Ukraine's use of cluster munitions in the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions, at least so far, "did not deliver any decisive effect."

As a condition of receiving cluster munitions from the United States, Mr. Zelensky and senior Ukrainian defense officials pledged to avoid firing them into areas where civilians could be hit.

Senior Russian officials, commanders and military bloggers on the front lines have for months accused Ukraine of firing cluster munitions not only at Russian troops, but also at areas populated by civilians.

The United States has dismissed such claims as disinformation. There has been evidence earlier in the war, however, that Ukraine appeared to sometimes use cluster munitions in populated areas.

For now, Ukrainian forces say the arrival of American cluster munitions have not only raised morale, but also helped to pick apart Russian defensive positions in the south, keep pressure on Russian troops in the east and hold back Russian assaults in the northeast.

And some experts point to some specific battles where they argue that cluster munitions have helped. One of those places is the small city of Kupiansk in Kharkiv Province, where Ukraine has used them in defense more than offense.

Ukraine has struggled for months to maintain control of Kupiansk in the face of a Russian advance. Losing it now would be a major blow, said Mr. Kasapoglu, who is also a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington and has been monitoring ground reports from Kupiansk on social media and other public sources.

Within two weeks of Mr. Biden's decision to send cluster munitions to Ukraine, they reached Kupiansk. By early August, the weapons were targeting Russian forces and armored vehicles trying to seize territory, Mr. Kasapoglu said.

The fighting in Kupiansk remains fierce. But so far, at least, Ukraine is holding the line, and Mr. Kasapoglu said that "cluster munitions have indeed played a major role."

Lara Jakes reported from Rome, and Eric Schmitt from Washington. Thomas Gibbons-Neff contributed reporting from Kyiv, Ukraine, and Marc Santora from southern Ukraine.

Drone Strike Jolts Home Of Russian Military Base

By MARC SANTORA

KYIV, Ukraine — Explosions rocked the area around one of Russia's largest military hubs before dawn on Thursday, and local officials later said that air defenses had shot down two drones.

At least one blast was heard in the city of Rostov-on-Don, which is home to Russia's southern military headquarters and is a command center for its forces in Ukraine. In June, the city drew world attention when mercenary fighters from the Wagner military company faced off with regular Russian soldiers there in a short-lived uprising.

On Thursday, Russian news outlets posted a series of videos showing an explosion in the center of Rostov-on-Don. The Russian Defense Ministry said that drone attacks in other regions had been thwarted.

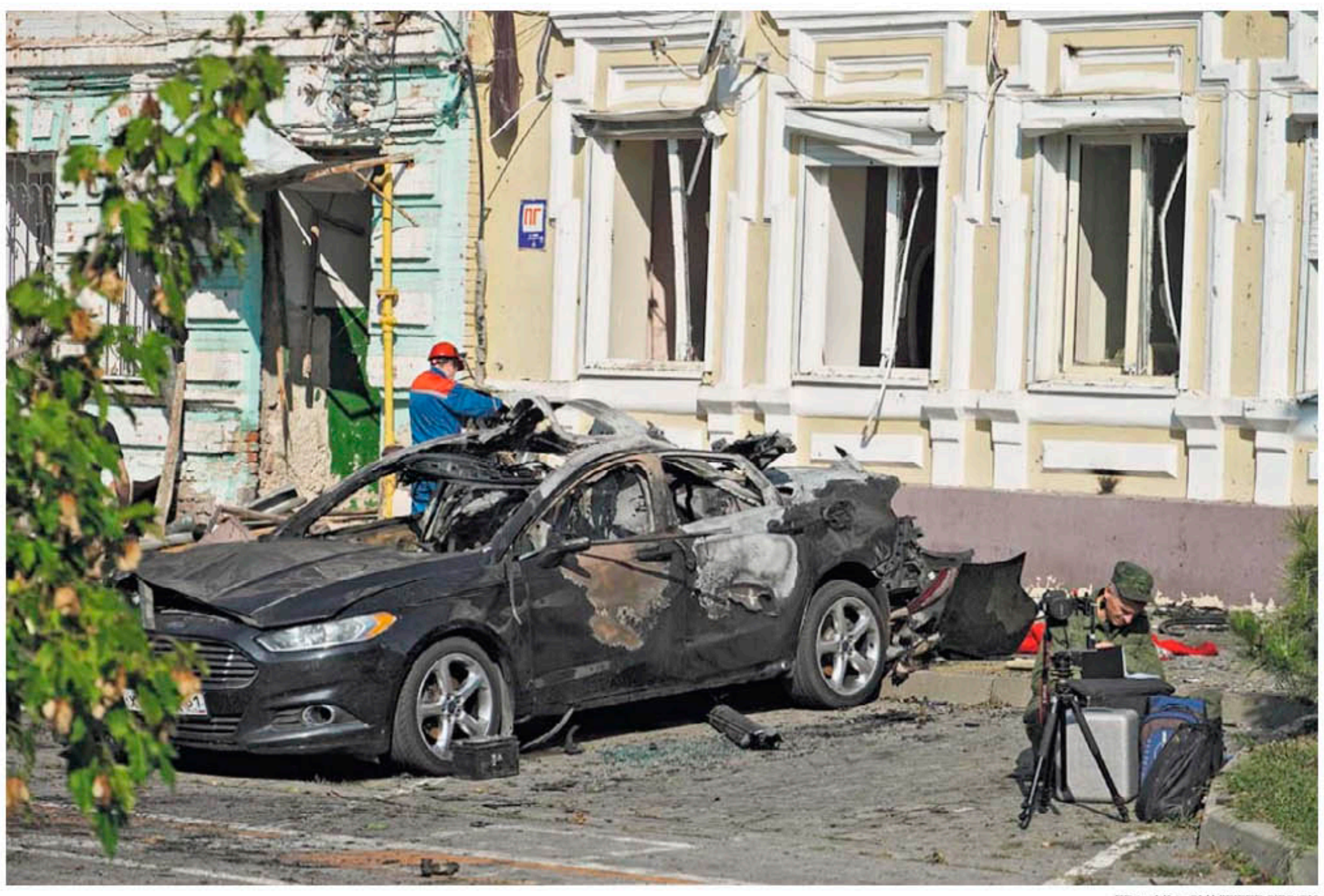
Vasily Golubev, the regional governor of Rostov, said debris that fell after air defenses downed the drones had damaged cars and buildings, injuring one person. One drone fell in the city center, he said in a post on the Telegram messaging app, listing an address that is across the street from the military headquarters. Another was shot down outside the city in the western part of the region, he said.

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has made several official visits to Rostov-on-Don since the start of the war. His most recent visit was on Aug. 19, when he received reports from Valery V. Gerasimov, the chief of the general staff of Russia's armed forces, and various commanders and senior officers, according to the Kremlin.

As a matter of official policy, the Ukrainian government does not comment on whether it has had a hand in the growing number of strikes across the border in Russia. But officials in Kyiv have become increasingly vocal in defending such strikes as warranted. President Volodymyr Zelensky has described the strikes as a "fair and just" way to bring the war home to Russia.

Last week, a wave of exploding drones targeted six Russian regions, including an airfield near the border with Estonia, a NATO member, where military cargo planes were damaged. In recent days, the airports around Moscow have had to temporarily suspend flights nearly every morning because of drone activity.

The forays are a sign, analysts say, that even as Kyiv has begged Western allies to supply long-range weapons, its own arms makers have built a homegrown arsenal that is capable of hitting Russian territory at a great distance by land, air and sea.



EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Investigating damage after a drone strike in downtown Rostov-on-Don, Russia, on Thursday.

The strikes in Russian territory have not caused remotely as much damage as Moscow's deadly attacks on Ukrainian cities, which often target civilian areas.

On Thursday, for the fourth time in five days, Russia attacked Izmail, a port city on the Danube River, said Oleg Kiper, the head of the region's military administration. Two people were wounded, the local prosecutor's office said.

On a visit to Ukraine on Thursday, the American secretary of state, Antony J. Blinken, praised "the extraordinary resilience of the Ukrainian people" while touring a school in the northern Chernihiv region, where Russian forces kept Ukrainian civilians hostage, including children, early in the war last year.

Earlier, Mr. Blinken, who spent two days in Ukraine before leaving Thursday night, met with state border guards near Kyiv and also with a demining team working to clear roughly 11 acres of unexploded ordnance that was scattered by an explosion. A day earlier, he met with Mr. Zelensky and announced more than $1 billion in new military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

Ukraine's limited incursions may be taking a toll on a foe.

As limited as the incursions onto Russian soil are, they may nevertheless be taking a toll.

Even before the latest strikes, Frederick B. Hodges, a former top U.S. Army commander in Europe, said that the attacks inside Russia were having a cumulative effect. They may be hurting the economy, he said, and heightening tensions in a Russian military command already unsettled by the Wagner mutiny and the setbacks in the war in Ukraine.

"You can be sure people are getting chewed out," General Hodges said in an interview. "There is going to be a lot of turmoil in the command structure."

Russia's air defense systems, largely designed to counter NATO air power, have the ability to limit the effectiveness of the strikes, he said, but the Kremlin's war planners may have to reposition aircraft and redeploy military assets to counter the growing Ukrainian threat.

"Those have to come from somewhere, so there is going to be a loss of protection somewhere," General Hodges said.

Erin Mendell, Constant Méheut and Valeriya Safronova contributed reporting.

War in Ukraine

Slovakia Vote Will Test Its Unity Over Ukraine

Party Poised to Win Opposes Helping Kyiv

By ANDREW HIGGINS

LADOMIROVA, Slovakia — When Ukraine discovered civilian mass graves in an area recaptured from Russian troops, Russia's ambassador in neighboring Slovakia countered with his own discovery.

The mayor of a remote Slovak village, as the ambassador announced last September, had bulldozed Russian graves from World War I. Ambassador Igor Bratchikov demanded that the Slovak government, a robust supporter of Ukraine, take action to punish the "blasphemous act."

The Slovak police responded swiftly, dismissing the ambassador's claims as a "hoax," but his fabrication took flight, amplified by vociferous pro-Russian groups in Slovakia and news outlets notorious for recycling Russian propaganda.

A month later, the mayor of the village, Vladislav Cuper, lost an election to a rival candidate from a populist party opposed to helping Ukraine.

Today, the same forces that helped unseat Mr. Cuper have mobilized for a general election in Slovakia on Sept. 30 with much bigger stakes.

The vote will not only decide who governs a small Central European nation with fewer than six million people, but will also indicate whether opposition to helping Ukraine, a position now mostly confined to the political fringes across Europe, could take hold in the mainstream.

The front-runner, according to opinion polls, is a party headed by Robert Fico, a pugnacious former prime minister who has vowed to halt Slovak arms deliveries to Ukraine, denounced sanctions against Russia and railed against NATO, despite his country's membership in the alliance.

A strong showing in the election by Mr. Fico and far-right parties hostile to the government in Kyiv would likely turn one of Ukraine's most stalwart backers — Slovakia was the first country to send it air-defense missiles and fighter jets — into a neutral bystander more sympathetic to Moscow. It would also end the isolation of Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary as the only leader in the European Union and NATO speaking out strongly against helping Ukraine.

"Russia is rejoicing," Rastislav Kacer, a former foreign minister and outspoken supporter of Ukraine, said in Bratislava, the Slovak capital. "Slovakia is a great success story for its propaganda. It has worked hard and very successfully to exploit my country as a wedge to divide Europe."

Thanks to widespread public discontent with the infighting between pro-Western Slovak politicians who came to power in 2020, and deep pools of genuine pro-Russian sentiment dating to the 19th century, Russia has been pushing on an open door.

A survey of public opinion across Eastern and Central Europe in March by Globsec, a Bratislava-based research group, found that only 40 percent of Slovaks blame Russia for the war in Ukraine, while 51 percent believe that either Ukraine or the West is "primarily responsible." In Poland, 85 percent blame Russia. In the Czech Republic, 71 percent think Russia is responsible.

Daniel Milo, director of an Interior Ministry department aimed at countering disinformation and other nonmilitary threats, acknowledged that "there is fertile ground here for pro-Russian sentiment." But he added that genuine sympathy rooted in history had been exploited by Russia and its local helpers to sow division and sour public opinion on Ukraine.

Those helpers include Hlavne Spravy, a popular anti-American news site, and a bikers group called Brat za Brata, or Brother for Brother, which is affiliated with the Kremlin-sponsored Night Wolves motorcycle gang in Russia.

A freelance writer for Hlavne Spravy, Bohus Garbar, was convicted of espionage this year after being caught on camera taking money from Russia's military attaché, who has since been expelled.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AKOS STILLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Vladislav Cuper, the former mayor of Ladomirova, Slovakia, at his home in the village. He said he was smeared by pro-Russian forces in Slovakia. Right, the World War I cemetery in Ladomirova that the Russian ambassador to Slovakia falsely said had been destroyed.

Brat za Brata, which has a large following on social media and close ties to the Russian embassy, has meanwhile worked to intimidate Russia's critics.

Peter Kalmus, a 70-year-old Slovak artist, said he was beaten up by members of the biker group last month after he defaced a Soviet war memorial in the eastern city of Kosice to protest Russian atrocities in Ukraine. In March, the bikers reduced to pandemonium a government-sponsored public debate about the war in a town near the Ukrainian border attended by Mr. Kacer, who was then still a minister. Fiercely pro-Russian protesters bused in by the bikers, recalled Mr. Kacer, "jumped on the stage screaming and spitting at us."

Many Slovaks, said Grigorij Meseznikov, the Russian-born president of the Institute for Public Affairs, a Bratislava research group, "have an invented romantic vision of Russia in their heads that does not really exist" and are easily swayed by "lies and propaganda" about the West.

That, he added, has made the country vulnerable to efforts by Moscow to rally pro-Russian sentiment in the hope of undermining European unity over Ukraine. Slovakia is a small country, Mr. Meseznikov said, but "if you take even a small brick out of a wall it can crumble."

That is certainly the hope of Lubos Blaha, a former member of a heavy metal band and the author of books on Lenin and Che Guevara who is now the deputy leader of Mr. Fico's surging political party, SMER. He is also one of Slovakia's loudest and most influential Kremlin-friendly voices on social media and regularly denounces his country's liberal woman president, Zuzana Caputova, as a "fascist" and pro-Ukrainian ministers as "American puppets."

Robert Fico, the election front-runner, wants to halt arms shipments to Ukraine.

"The mood in Europe is changing," Mr. Blaha said in an interview, describing the conflict in Ukraine as "a war of the American empire against the Russian empire" that cannot be won because Russia is a nuclear power.

Insisting he was "not pro-Russia, just pro my country's national interests," Mr. Blaha predicted that countries hostile to arming Ukraine would soon "be in the majority while supporters of Ukraine will be in a small minority," especially if Donald J. Trump wins the next presidential election in the United States.

In the run-up to Slovakia's own election, the usually placid country has been swamped by heated accusations on all sides of foreign interference. Mr. Fico has accused NATO of meddling in the campaign, while his foes have pointed a finger at Russia.

Describing Mr. Fico's SMER party as a "Trojan horse" for Russia, Jaroslav Nad, a former defense minister who led a push to send arms to Ukraine, claimed this summer that, according to intelligence reports, a Slovak citizen he didn't identify had visited Russia "to receive financial resources to benefit SMER." But, citing confidentiality, he produced no evidence, and his claim has been widely dismissed as a pre-election smear.

Still, the Russian ambassador's fabricated story of desecrated war graves highlighted Russia's skill at fishing in Slovakia's troubled waters. It also provided what Mr. Milo, the interior ministry official, called "a very rare smoking gun" directly implicating Moscow in scripting a fake scandal.

During a visit last week to the still-intact graveyard in Ladomirova, Mr. Cuper said that in his view Russia did not care who won the mayoral vote there, but had spotted a good opportunity "to distract attention from mass graves in Ukraine" and "present itself as a victim."

When the ambassador visited Ladomirova, he met with Mr. Cuper's bitter rival, a former mayor whom Mr. Cuper had accused of embezzling village funds and who was convicted of fraud in 2019. The former mayor's wife, Olga Bojcikova, who declined to be interviewed, was at the time running against Mr. Cuper, who was backed by pro-Ukrainian parties, in the local election last October. She won.

The ambassador's story of "razed" Russian graves, though debunked by the police, was, Mr. Cuper recalled, "blown out of all proportion" by Kremlin-friendly Slovaks, particularly the Brat za Brata bikers. The bikers posted incendiary statements on Facebook denouncing the mayor's "blasphemous act" and rallied its members to respond. This set off calls for Mr. Cuper to be "executed," "buried alive" and "flogged like a dog."

Slovakia's prosecutor general, Maros Zilinka, who has a long history of sympathy for Russia and hostility to the United States, added fuel to the fire by announcing that the mayor could be liable for criminal prosecution for a "morally reprehensible act" that needed to be investigated.

Mr. Cuper said he never touched the graves but had removed stone border markers because they were falling apart.

The ambassador's story, he said, was "entirely untrue" but still "created a national uproar."

U.S. Has Seized Iranian Oil Over Hijackings In the Persian Gulf That Escalated Tensions

By CHARLIE SAVAGE and RONEN BERGMAN

WASHINGTON — The United States government has seized nearly one million barrels of Iranian crude oil that it says was being smuggled to China in violation of U.S. sanctions against Iran, after it raised the threat of prosecution to get the tanker brought to American waters, newly unsealed court papers show.

The seizure of the oil from the vessel, the M/T Suez Rajan, is part of a larger and shadowy conflict with Iran. After the tanker began to steam toward the United States last spring, Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps seized two oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz, prompting the U.S. military to increase patrols and deploy additional assets to protect shipping lanes.

In July, Iranian state news media said the Guards' navy commander had warned that Tehran would hold Washington responsible if the tanker's oil was unloaded, without giving further details. On Wednesday, a high-ranking Israeli defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the seizure raised new fears that Iran could hijack more tankers in an effort to deter the United States from repeating the move.

The court filings offer a rare glimpse into what prosecutors describe as an oil smuggling operation that kept a tanker's location from being accurately tracked, falsified cargo records and deployed other techniques in an attempt to evade U.S. sanctions.

A spokesman for the Justice Department said it planned to issue a statement about the matter soon.

While the court filings in the case had remained sealed for months, elements of the effective American seizure of the M/T Suez Rajan had been in public view.

The tanker was sitting off the coast of Texas for several months because the government had trouble finding a company willing to offload it and risk Iranian retaliation. The standstill prompted a bipartisan group of lawmakers to urge President Biden last month to complete the seizure, calling the delay because of such fears "unacceptable."

United Against Nuclear Iran, a nonprofit organization that includes many former U.S. and foreign government security officials, first brought attention to the likelihood that the Suez Rajan was carrying illicit oil in February 2022, citing satellite imagery.

The organization's chief executive, Mark Wallace, a former ambassador in the George W. Bush administration, said that a Greek company that managed the vessel ultimately brought another of its ships to Texas to complete the offloading. He praised the company, Empire Navigation, for braving what he portrayed as transnational intimidation by Iran and eventually "doing the right thing."

But he said that the length of time it had taken to resolve the matter underscored a larger problem, and that his group had identified some 300 other such tankers likely engaged in Iranian oil smuggling, based on similar data.

Christopher Man, a lawyer representing Empire Navigation, did not return a request for comment by phone and email. Empire Navigation agreed to cooperate and obtained a deferred prosecution agreement in April, court filings show, while a subsidiary that operates the vessel, Suez Rajan Limited, pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to violate U.S. sanctions.

A move raises new fears that Iran could take more vessels.

The dispute heightened tensions as the United States negotiated a prisoner exchange with Iran. Under the deal, five American detainees there will eventually leave in exchange for the release of several jailed Iranians by the United States and Tehran's gaining access to $6 billion in Iranian oil revenue that had been frozen in South Korea. (United Against Nuclear Iran condemned the deal.)

As the oil was being unloaded from the Suez Rajan last week, Nasser Kanaani, a spokesman for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, portrayed recent American actions as contradictory in remarks to journalists. He said Tehran had summoned Switzerland's top diplomat in Iran — the Swiss Embassy handles American interests in Iran — to express a "strong objection" over the United States' seizure of the oil, which he acknowledged was Iranian, and called the move "a completely unproductive action."

The Justice Department had leverage in the case of the Suez Rajan because its owners and operators have ties to the Western economy. The vessel was financed by a British maritime firm, Fleetscape, which is backed by an American investment company, Oaktree Capital Management.

According to the court filings, in early February 2022, Suez Rajan, which was then empty and operated by Empire, anchored near Singapore and took on a small amount of legal oil — about 4,000 barrels — in a transfer with a vessel called the CS Brilliance.

But about a week later, it took on a far larger amount of oil that originated in Iran — nearly a million barrels — from another vessel, the Virgo. While satellite imagery showed the two side by side, the Virgo reported a false location of about eight miles away. Paperwork was falsified to indicate that all of the oil had come from the Brilliance, the filings said.

After United Against Nuclear Iran raised smuggling allegations, including in a letter to Oaktree Capital Management, Empire Navigation stopped the vessel from going to China and publicly said it was investigating whether Iranian oil had been illicitly transferred to a vessel it was managing.

It is not clear when the U.S. government began investigating the ship. But in March 2022, a group of victims of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, tried to seize the oil, citing information supplied by United Against Nuclear Iran. The plaintiffs had won a default judgment against Iran worth billions of dollars for purportedly aiding the Al Qaeda terrorists, and were trying to collect.

Their effort ultimately failed in court. But the Justice Department had an additional tool: the ability to bring criminal charges. The court filings showed it had negotiated the deferred prosecution agreement with Empire Navigation, which agreed to cooperate — ultimately bringing the ship to the waters off Texas so the Iranian oil could be seized.

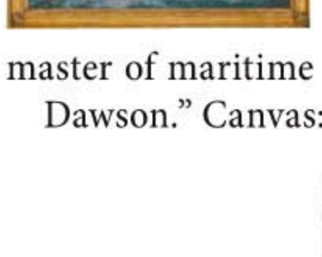
Mr. Wallace said the oil would be sold and the proceeds likely put into a government-run fund that compensates victims of state-sponsored terrorist attacks.

Citing "operational and security risks," the Justice Department kept the legal proceedings secret until all the oil had been unloaded.

Charlie Savage reported from Washington and Ronen Bergman from Tel Aviv.

SETTING SAIL
MONTAGUE DAWSON

Maritime artist. Dynamic realism. Monumental artwork.



Montague Dawson vividly renders the majesty of a ketch ship at full sail in this monumental original oil on canvas. The artist captures the *Nonsuch* at the height of her glory, battling waves on the open sea. Dawson exhibited his works at the Royal Academy regularly and is revered as the master of maritime painting. Early 20th century. Signed "Montague Dawson." Canvas: 40"h x 50"w. Frame: 46⅞"h x 56¾"w. #31-7335

Scan to learn more about this painting

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO SILVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A crowded barge began a journey of several days down the Nile last month in Renk, South Sudan, left. People boarding the barge, right, before being relocated to their place of origin or to other camps.

Civil War Drives South Sudanese Back to an Ill-Prepared Homeland

From Page A1

joining cities, and also in the Darfur region of western Sudan, where mass graves have been uncovered. Regional and international efforts to end the fighting have hit a stalemate, with General al-Burhan dismissing any attempts at mediation last month in advance of his first postwar foreign trip to Egypt.

On Wednesday, the United States imposed sanctions on senior leaders in the paramilitary force, including General Hamdan's brother, Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo.

The vicious fighting has precipitated a staggering humanitarian crisis that has left millions in Sudan, a nation of 46 million, facing shortages of food, water, medicine and electricity. Thousands of people have been killed and injured in the conflict, the United Nations, Sudanese officials and aid agencies estimate.

The war in Sudan has displaced more than 5.2 million people, according to the U.N. refugee agency, with more than a million of them flooding into neighboring countries already facing their own economic and political challenges.

One of those countries is South Sudan, which has received more than 250,000 people to date. A country of 11 million, it became the world's newest nation when it gained independence from Sudan in 2011, but soon after was torn apart by a civil war set off by a power struggle between the country's political leaders.

Intercommunal violence, chronic food shortages and devastating floods continue to afflict the country — and many South Sudanese are now fleeing the war in Sudan only to begin a new ordeal in their homeland.

"They are coming to start from zero," Albino Akol Atak, the South Sudanese minister for humanitarian affairs and disaster management, said in an interview in the capital, Juba.

At the Joda border crossing between the two nations, almost 2,000 people, most of them South Sudanese, plod through every day after sunrise. Many arrive after weeks of walking or driving through territory teeming with robbers and paramilitary forces who they said took their phones and food, sexually assaulted the women and beat the men.

After being processed and given high-energy bars, the new arrivals are crammed into buses that transport them to a transit center nearly 40 miles away in Renk. Designed to hold 3,000 people, the center is now packed with twice as many.

During a recent visit, people were crowded into a muddy field with limited access to showers or toilets. Some families fashioned makeshift shelters from plastic tarpaulins or bedsheets. Others sat in the open, braving the 100-degree Fahrenheit temperatures during the day and deluges of rain at night.

At the transit camp in Renk, access to showers or toilets is limited. Some families have fashioned shelters from sheets or tarpaulins.

A child suffering from measles and malnutrition recovering in a hospital in Renk, left. People at the transit camp in Renk, right. Many of those arriving there fled their homes and businesses in Sudan and have brought with them only meager belongings.

As the afternoon sun blazed, the air filled with the wailing of sick and hungry children.

"They blew our lives up," Muawiya Salah Yusuf, a 29-year-old Sudanese said of the warring generals as he cuddled his 2-year-old son, Yasir, and begged him to stop crying.

Mr. Yusuf, who has a degree in electrical engineering, had for years struggled to find a job. But he was finally able to open a shop selling and repairing phones in Omdurman, a city near Khartoum. Now, all that was lost, he said, and he found himself sharing a small tent in Renk with 10 family members.

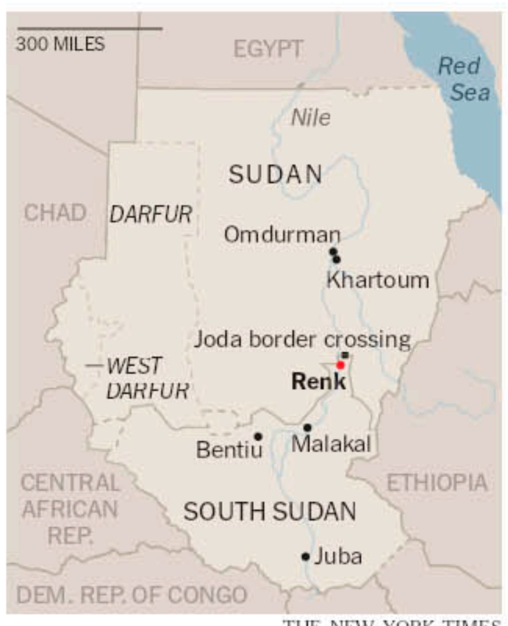
"I feel like we are living in an alternate reality," he said, musing about how long he would be marooned in the squalid purgatory of the camp with his sick child and his wife, who was seven months pregnant.

"I feel so hopeless I can't even think of tomorrow," he said.

Several miles away, hundreds of Sudanese and South Sudanese streamed into the Renk County Hospital every day, medical officials said, burdening a facility with limited staff and shortages of water, electricity and medical supplies.

In the children's intensive care unit, malnourished babies lay nearly lifeless as intravenous fluids dripped into their veins. In the surgical section, men nursed bullet wounds that they said had been inflicted by Sudan's paramilitary forces. Almost all those interviewed said they had relatives and friends in Sudan who had been killed or who had disappeared weeks or months ago.

Funding for the crisis hasn't kept up with the growing needs, even as the United Nations and humanitarian agencies grapple with a shortage of staff and dwindling food and medical supplies. Donor nations — focused on Ukraine, their own economic challenges and other competing crises



THE NEW YORK TIMES

in Africa and beyond — have pledged only 20 percent of the $1 billion needed to support those fleeing the violence this year.

"The very low levels of funding in response to the emergency in Sudan and from Sudan is really a shame," Filippo Grandi, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, said in an interview during a recent visit to South Sudan. "This needs to change."

Almost 700,000 children with severe malnutrition are at risk of dying in Sudan, the United Nations has said, and about 500 children have already died from hunger, according to Save the Children, a nonprofit aid organization.

Given the limited services and remoteness of towns like Renk, South Sudanese officials say they don't want to establish permanent camps there. Instead, they are moving the displaced people back to their original villages in South Sudan or to camps and transit centers elsewhere where they can get food and health care.

But heavy rains have rendered vast parts of South Sudan inaccessible by road, forcing the authorities to transport people on boats and barges on the Nile.

On a recent afternoon, more than 600 people jammed onto a barge headed from Renk to Malakal, a city in South Sudan's Upper Nile state, their mud-caked feet and flip-flops resting on their meager belongings stacked below them. Many of them were eager to begin the dayslong journey but said they were worried about what awaited them.

In a few days, Ms. Gai, the house cleaner grieving over the loss of two sons, said that she would be on a similar vessel, returning to her village near Bentiu, a city in South Sudan's Unity State.

She wondered what the farm she left behind would look like, or what the future held for her three remaining children. But before her departure, she wanted to do one more thing: visit the grave of her 3-year-old son.

"I never want to go back to Sudan," she said. "But I know it will not be easy where I am going."

Gabon Military Ends Ousted President's House Arrest, Saying He's Free to Leave the Nation

By ABDI LATIF DAHIR

NAIROBI, Kenya — Ali Bongo Ondimba, who was deposed as president of Gabon last week in a coup that ended his family's decades-long grip on power in the central African nation, is no longer subject to house arrest and is free to leave the country, the ruling military junta has said.

Mr. Bongo's health has long been a concern after he suffered a stroke five years ago and was often seen walking with a cane. The military said in a statement read on national television on Wednesday night that he would be allowed to travel overseas for medical care.

The announcement from the military came two days after the leader of the coup, Gen. Brice Oligui Nguema, a cousin of the ousted leader and the head of the elite Republican Guard that was tasked with guarding him, was sworn in as Gabon's new leader.

Yann Leyimangoye contributed reporting from Libreville, Gabon, and Elian Peltier from Dakar, Senegal.

After taking the oath on Monday, General Nguema promised to hold free and fair elections but did not indicate when or how they would take place.

The military has also detained members of Mr. Bongo's family

Ali Bongo Ondimba was removed from power in August, hours after being re-elected.

along with several senior advisers on charges including corruption, embezzlement and treason. Mr. Bongo was removed from power in late August, just hours after being re-elected for a third term in a vote that was disputed by opposition groups.

It was not immediately clear where the detainees were or if they would be tried soon, but for the moment, Mr. Bongo appears to have been granted some freedom.

"Given his state of health, former president of the republic Ali Bongo Ondimba is free to move about," Col. Ulrich Manfoumbi, the spokesman for the transition committee, said. "He may, if he so wishes, travel abroad to undergo medical checkups."

On Wednesday, Mr. Bongo also met with Abdou Abarry, the head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, at his residence in the capital, Libreville. Mr. Abarry later told reporters that Mr. Bongo was in good health and hoped that "peace, stability and social cohesion would be preserved in Gabon."

Mr. Abarry also met General Nguema and later told reporters that the U.N. was ready to support Gabon as it transitioned back to a "constitutional order."

On Thursday afternoon, the military leadership appointed Raymond Ndong Sima, an opposition figure who had previously served under Mr. Bongo, as interim prime minister.

The coup in Gabon was the latest in a series of military takeovers across Africa, afflicting nations tormented by insecurity, corruption and the growing ranks of frustrated youth.

Over the past three years, at least nine coups have rattled countries in Africa, from Sudan in the northeast to Mali and Burkina

A new leader is sworn in, replacing a family that ruled for decades.

Faso in the west and Chad in central Africa. The events in Gabon were most recently preceded by a coup in late July in Niger, where the military ousted and arrested Mohamed Bazoum, the country's democratically elected president.

Mr. Bongo came to power in 2009 after the death of his father, Omar, who ruled the oil-rich nation for more than four decades. An avid musician, Mr. Bongo positioned himself as an environmental crusader and won accolades for preserving the rainforests that cover 90 percent of Gabon.

The latest coup was received with mixed reactions outside Gabon. While most of Gabon's partners condemned it, and the African Union suspended the country's membership, others also pointed to Mr. Bongo's dynastic grip on power.

"Military coups are not the solution, but we must not forget that just before this, Gabon held elections full of irregularities," Josep Borrell Fontelles, the European Union's foreign policy chief, said last week. "If I rig elections to take power, that is also an irregular way of getting power."

Mr. Bongo also appeared in a video calling for his "friends all over the world" to "make noise" about the military takeover, which has been turned into memes on social media.

But there was considerable discontentment with his rule at home, where the country's more than two million people suffered under the yoke of poverty, growing unemployment and rising food prices. In 2019, the authorities quashed an effort to seize power when a group of soldiers took over the state radio station and urged people to revolt against the president.

Unlike Mr. Bazoum who remains in detention in Niger, Mr. Bongo's release showed that "he was not the key target" of the coup and that the military leadership did not "perceive him as a potential threat," said Maja Bovcon, senior analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a risk consultancy.

Instead, Ms. Bovcon said, the main targets were his powerful wife, Sylvia Bongo Ondimba, and his son, Noureddin Bongo Valentin, who was seen as a potential successor.

After the coup, civilians across Gabon welcomed the removal of Mr. Bongo from power and hoped it would herald a new era for the country. Many others took to the streets this week to welcome the military's release of political prisoners who had been jailed during his presidency.

"Why are they letting him go?" Danny Ndong, a 36-year-old banker in Libreville, said, adding, "Who will now answer for the way the country was run in the past?"

Japan Joins the New Moon Race, And Launches an X-Ray Telescope

By KATRINA MILLER and KENNETH CHANG

On Thursday morning in Japan, a bus-size telescope with X-Ray vision soared into space.

It wasn't alone. Along for the ride was a robotic moon lander about the size of a small food truck. The two missions — XRISM and SLIM — would soon part ways, one headed off to spy on some of the hottest spots in our universe, the other to help Japan's space agency, JAXA, test technologies that are to be used in larger-scale lunar landings in the future.

The liftoff from the shores of Tanegashima, an island in the southern part of the Japanese archipelago, was picturesque, with the Japanese H-IIA rocket soaring over the remote launch site and disappearing into the blue skies that were punctuated by a few clouds. About 47 minutes after the flight began, launch officials were shown in a live video stream to be celebrating in the mission control room as the XRISM and SLIM spacecrafts headed toward their diverging cosmic destinations.

The X-Ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission — XRISM for short (and pronounced like "chrism") — is the launch's primary passenger. From an orbit 350 miles above Earth, XRISM will study exotic environments that emit X-Ray radiation, including the accretion of material swirling around black holes, the blistering plasma permeating galaxy clusters, and the remnants of exploding massive stars.

Data from the telescope will shed light on the motion and chemistry of these cosmic locales with a technique called spectroscopy, which relies on changes in the brightness of sources at different wavelengths to extract information about their composition. The technique gives scientists a view into some of the universe's highest energy phenomena and will add to astronomers' comprehensive, multiwavelength picture of the universe.

XRISM's spectroscopy will "reveal energy flows among the celestial objects in different scales" with unprecedented resolution, Makoto Tashiro, the telescope's principal investigator and an astrophysicist at JAXA, wrote in an email.

The Japanese space agency is leading the mission in collaboration with NASA. The European Space Agency contributed to the telescope's construction, which means that astronomers from Europe will be allotted a portion of the telescope's observing time.

XRISM is a rebuild of the Hitomi mission, a JAXA spacecraft that launched in 2016. The Hitomi telescope spun out of control weeks into its mission, and Japan lost contact with the spacecraft.

"It was a devastating loss," said Brian J. Williams, an astrophysicist at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center who was on the Hitomi team and is now a XRISM project scientist. The little data collected from Hitomi was a tantalizing taste of what a mission like it could offer.

"We realized that we really had to go and build this mission again, because this is the future of X-ray astronomy," Dr. Williams said.

Unlike other wavelengths of light, cosmic X-rays can only be detected from above Earth's atmosphere, which shields us from the harmful radiation. XRISM will join a slew of other X-ray telescopes already in orbit, including NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory, which launched in 1999, and NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer, which joined the party in 2021.

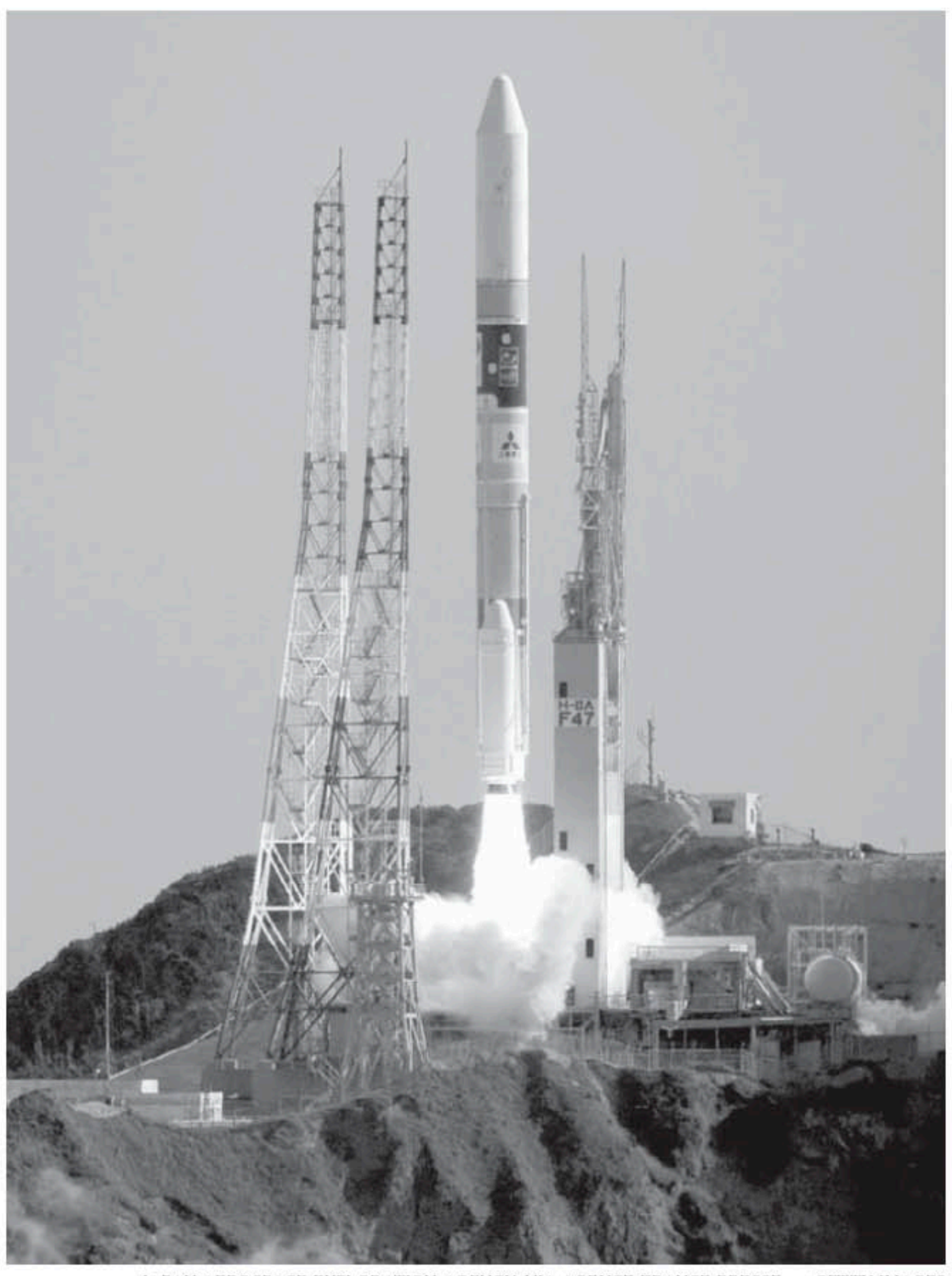
What distinguishes XRISM from those missions is a tool called Resolve, which must be cooled to just a fraction above absolute zero so that the instrument can measure tiny changes in temperature when X-rays hit its surface. The mission team expects Resolve's spectroscopic data to be 30 times as sharp as the resolution of Chandra's instruments.

Lia Corrales, an astronomer at the University of Michigan who was selected as a participating scientist on the mission, sees XRISM as "a pioneer vehicle" that represents "the next step in X-ray observations." With its state-of-the-art spectroscopy, Dr. Corrales will analyze the composition of interstellar dust to glean insight into the chemical evolution of our universe.

Jan-Uwe Ness, an astronomer at the European Space Agency who will be managing the proposal selection process for Europe's allotted observing time, said that the superior quality of data collected by XRISM's spectroscopy may feel almost like visiting these extreme environments themselves.

"I'm looking forward to the spectral revolution," he said, adding that it will set the stage for even more ambitious X-ray telescopes in the future.

XRISM also carries a second instrument named Xtend that will operate simultaneously with Resolve. While Resolve zooms in, Xtend will zoom out, providing scientists with complementary views of the same X-ray sources over a larger area. According to Dr. Williams, Xtend is less powerful than the imager on the older Chandra telescope, which has generated some of the most striking views of the X-ray universe to date. But, Xtend will photograph the cosmos with a resolution comparable to the way our eyes might perceive it if we were to have X-ray vision.



JAPAN AEROSPACE EXPLORATION AGENCY, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A H-IIA rocket carrying a lunar surface probe and other objects lifted off on Thursday from Tanegashima, an island in the southern part of Japan.

Once XRISM arrives at low-Earth orbit, researchers will spend the next few months turning the instruments on and running tests of their performance. Science operations will begin in January, but initial studies from the data might not appear for a year or more, Dr. Tashiro said. Ahead of any discoveries, he's just excited to see the instruments up and running, adding that "we will surely see the new world of X-ray astronomy once they work."

More than anything, Dr. Williams is looking forward to the "unknown unknowns" that XRISM might unearth. "Every time we launch a new capability, we discover something new about the universe," he said. "What will it be for this one? I don't know, but I'm excited to find out."

The Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, is the next robotic spacecraft headed for the moon but may not be the next one to land.

SLIM will be taking a long, roundabout journey of at least four months that requires less propellant. The lander will take several months to reach lunar orbit, then spend a month circling the moon before attempting to set down on the surface near Shioli crater on the lunar near side.

That means two American spacecraft, by Astrobotic Technology of Pittsburgh and Intuitive Machines of Houston, which might launch later this year and will take more direct trajectories to the moon, could beat SLIM to the surface.

Although SLIM is carrying a camera that can identify the composition of rocks around the landing site, the primary objectives of the mission are not scientific. Rather, it is to demonstrate a pinpoint navigation system, aiming to set down within about the length of a football field of the targeted site.

Currently, lunar landers can try to set down within several miles of a selected landing site. For example, the landing zone for India's Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft, which last month became the first to successfully set down in the moon's south polar region, was seven miles wide and 34 miles long.

The vision-based systems on many landing craft are limited because space-hardened computer chips possess only about one one-hundredth of the processing power of top-of-the-line chips used on Earth, JAXA said in its press kit.

For SLIM, JAXA developed image-processing algorithms that can run quickly on the slower space chips. As SLIM nears its landing, a camera will help guide the spacecraft's descent to the lunar surface; radar and a laser will measure the spacecraft's altitude and downward velocity.

Because of the risks of a crash that come with current systems, lunar landers are typically directed to flatter, less interesting terrain. A more precise navigation system would enable future spacecraft to land closer to rugged terrain that is of scientific interest, like the craters that contain frozen water near the moon's south pole.

At launch, SLIM weighs more than 1,500 pounds; more than two-thirds of the weight is propellant. By contrast, the Indian lunar lander and its small rover weighed about 3,800 pounds, and the accompanying propulsion module that pushed the two out of Earth's orbit toward the moon added 4,700 pounds.

Intense Rains Submerge Some Villages in Greece

By NIKI KITSANTONIS

ATHENS — A night of heavy rainfall compounded major flooding in central Greece, leaving some villages almost completely under water on Thursday and prompting the government to deploy armed forces to help rescue residents from the worst-hit areas.

At least six people have died in Greece as a result of the extreme weather conditions this week, according to the country's fire service. And the toll could rise amid reports of missing residents.

Fire service vehicles were unable to reach many of the worst-hit spots because the water was so deep, reaching six feet in some parts, according to the government spokesman, Pavlos Marinakis. He said divers from the fire service were using dinghies to try to reach trapped residents but it was difficult for aircraft to access some of the areas because of lightning. The coast guard was sending divers to help in the rescue efforts.

In neighboring Turkey, at least nine people have been killed in floods that have hit multiple areas in the country since Sunday, including Istanbul, the most populous city.

Global warming has brought more intense wildfires and flooding to Greece in recent years and last month's fires in northern Greece were the biggest ever recorded in Europe, according to European Union officials. Meteorologists have been stunned by the level of rainfall that has pounded central Greece this week, calling it the heaviest in decades.

Greek military forces were helping to rescue trapped citizens and repair major damage to roads to restore transport, the head of the armed forces, Konstantinos Floros, said at a news conference on Thursday.

"All our forces are on standby and operating in the affected areas," he said, adding that 11 vehicles and 30 dinghies were in operation and that more would be mobilized while seven helicopters were on standby. Special military units have been dispatched to areas where bridges have collapsed to help rebuild them, he said.

The Greek prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, has ordered the creation of an operations center to coordinate the rescues of trapped residents, distribute food and water, and try to restore power and running water. He was being briefed on Thursday on the extent of the damage to homes and infrastructure by civil protection and emergency service officials and was planning to tour the affected region this weekend, the government spokesman said.

As the storm over central Greece eased Thursday afternoon, Greek television showed a helicopter rescuing residents from homes almost entirely submerged in muddy floodwaters.

Greek coast guard vessels also rescued people who had been trapped in the seaside villages of Mikro and were rescuing more from Platania in southern Pelion on Thursday afternoon, the coast guard said in a text message sent to reporters. According to the state Athens-Macedonia news agency, more than 100 people, including local residents and tourists, were rescued from Mikro, where they had been trapped for three days. According to the same agency, hundreds more people were trapped in Platania.

In the port city of Volos in central Greece, home to about 125,000 people and one of the hardest hit places, hundreds of homes remained without power and running water for a second day on Thursday. The local authorities sent out agricultural vehicles to plow through the submerged streets and to distribute bottled water to residents.

The mayor of Volos, Achilleas Beos, said the army would bolster efforts in the coming hours to help distribute food.

Footage posted on Facebook from the village of Palamas in central Greece showed houses almost

STERGIOS SPIROPOULOS/REUTERS

THE NEW YORK TIMES

ALEXANDROS AVRAMIDIS/REUTERS

Rescue efforts were underway on Thursday after overnight rains worsened major flooding in central Greece, including in Flamouli, above, and Platania, left. This week's weather-related death toll in Greece and Turkey, at least 15, is likely to rise.

fully submerged in muddy water and people on the roofs of their homes speaking on cellphones. The local mayor, Giorgos Sakellariou, speaking to Greek media outlets, called the situation in the village tragic.

"There are dozens of people trapped in Palamas," he said. "People are going to drown. I've been calling everywhere," he added, saying that he had been asking the authorities for a helicopter to help rescue residents since Wednesday.

When a resident of Vlochos, another flooded village in the same area as Palamas, called a Greek television station to ask for help, a spokesman for the Greek fire service, Yiannis Artopios, who was being interviewed at the same time, asked for residents to be patient for a few more hours as extreme weather conditions were forecast to ease on Thursday afternoon. Greece's fire service received nearly 5,000 calls for help nationwide since Tuesday morning, he said.

Kostas Tsioukas, from the village of Metamorfosi, also in central Greece, told a Greek television station that residents were waiting for help.

"There are old people here, children, disabled people," he said. "There are some people who are missing."

Greece's civil protection minister, Vassilis Kikilias, said that a search was underway for six people reported missing in the village of Agia Triada in central Greece. He said that five villages, including Palamas and Agia Triada, had been cut off by the flooding. But with the extreme weather set to ease over the coming hours, rescue efforts will be intensified, he told a news briefing.

Rescuers in Turkey were searching for the fourth straight day for a 3-month-old baby who drifted away from her mother in central Turkey when a heavy rainfall hit on Sunday, the Demiroren news agency reported.

Turkish officials warned Thursday of another wave of heavy rain expected to hit northern and western parts of the country.

Teams in Turkey Try to Rescue Sick American From Cave 3,000 Feet Underground

By SAFAK TIMUR and EMMA BUBOLA

ISTANBUL — Emergency teams are trying to rescue a 40-year-old American man who fell ill while more than 3,000 feet under ground during a cave expedition in southern Turkey, recovery crews said on Thursday.

The European Cave Rescue Association said in a statement that it received an initial report of the illness on Saturday, and it soon became clear that the man, Mark Dickey, himself a cave expert and rescuer, had gastrointestinal bleeding and was unable to leave the cave on his own.

The association said the rescue from the Morca Cave in southern Turkey would be challenging given how deep Mr. Dickey was.

"Rescue missions from such deepness are very rare, extremely difficult and need many very experienced cave rescuers," it said.

The Speleological Federation of Turkey, which is helping with the rescue, said Thursday that Mr. Dickey's condition had improved and that he might be able to leave

Medical teams reached Mark Dickey, left, and gave him care this week, a rescue group said.

the cave with help.

"Mark is getting better," the federation wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "Doctors will decide whether it is possible for him to come out without a stretcher."

Yaman Ozakin, a spokesman for a rescue team affiliated with the Speleological Federation of Turkey, said a plan was underway to send a special harness to the cave that included a seat to lift Mr. Dickey, out of the cave. But extracting him that way could take a long time, he said.

"It would take 15 hours for a perfectly healthy, experienced caver to come out from that depth," Mr. Ozakin said, adding that the cave was full of narrow, meandering passageways.

Mr. Dickey had been part of an expedition of 14 people, Mr. Ozakin said. Rescue workers said that he had been with two people at the time he fell sick, with other members of the expedition elsewhere in the cave system, or waiting outside to enter.

Medical teams from Hungary and Bulgaria managed to reach Mr. Dickey and other members of his expedition in the cave earlier this week, set up a tent and give him medical care, according to the European Cave Rescue Association. Rescuers from Italy, Croatia and Poland were also operating in the cave, cave experts said.

The Morca Cave, which is mainly made of limestone, is the third-deepest in Turkey, with a depth of 4,186 feet, or 1,276 meters, according to the Turkish federation. It is more than 13,000 feet long.

The European Cave Rescue Association said Mr. Dickey was a highly trained caver and a well-known figure in the international community of speleologists, or cave experts, who had participated in many expeditions around the world.

He is also a senior member of the European Cave Rescue Association's medical committee, and an instructor for cave rescue organizations in the United States, according to the statement.

Emma Bubola reported from London, and Safak Timur from Istanbul.

Researchers Identify Jews Aided by Catholics in Nazi Era

By ELISABETTA POVOLEDO

HULTON ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

A group of historians convened by a research institution of the Vatican announced on Thursday the discovery of documents naming thousands of Jews in Rome who received safe haven in Catholic convents and monasteries during the Nazi occupation of the Second World War.

Historians have long known that some Catholic institutions in Rome provided refuge to some Jews during the period; the documents for the first time supplied some of their identities. But experts say that although the discovery adds to scholarship of the period, it does not fundamentally change the historical understanding of the actions of the church and of Pius XII, the pope at the time.

Nearly 2,000 Jews, about a sixth of Rome's Jewish population, were deported from Rome and murdered during the Nazi occupation, from September 1943 to June 1944, while Pius remained publicly silent.

"Now we have specific names and numbers, so, from the historiographical point of view, it's clearly a great satisfaction," said Liliana Picciotto, a historian at the CDEC Foundation, a Jewish research institute in Milan, referring to the documents, which were in fact discovered 15 years ago but studied only recently.

"But it doesn't change the historical judgment" of Pius, "which remains harsh," she said.

The church's history of involvement in the persecution of Jews long predates Pius and the massacres of the last century. For well over a millennium, Jews were subjected to forced conversion, expulsion, censorship, mass murder by roving Christian mobs and life in ghettos. And that was all before the Inquisition got going.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI became the first pope to visit Israel, and in 1965, the church issued the Latin document "Nostra Aetate," or "In Our Times," which deplored antisemitism and said Jews could not collectively be blamed for the death of Jesus. In 2000, Pope John Paul II offered a sweeping apology for the mistreatment of Jews by Catholics, though he did not specifically apologize for the role of the church leadership in the gravest crimes, including the Holocaust.

In 2019, Pope Francis ordered the archives of Pius opened, saying, "The church is not afraid of history." Initial evidence from those archives painted a picture of Pius as a pope whose fear of Communism, belief that the Axis powers would win the war and desire to protect the church's interests and avoid alienating millions of German, and Nazi-sympathizing, Catholics, all motivated him to avoid confronting or offending Hitler.

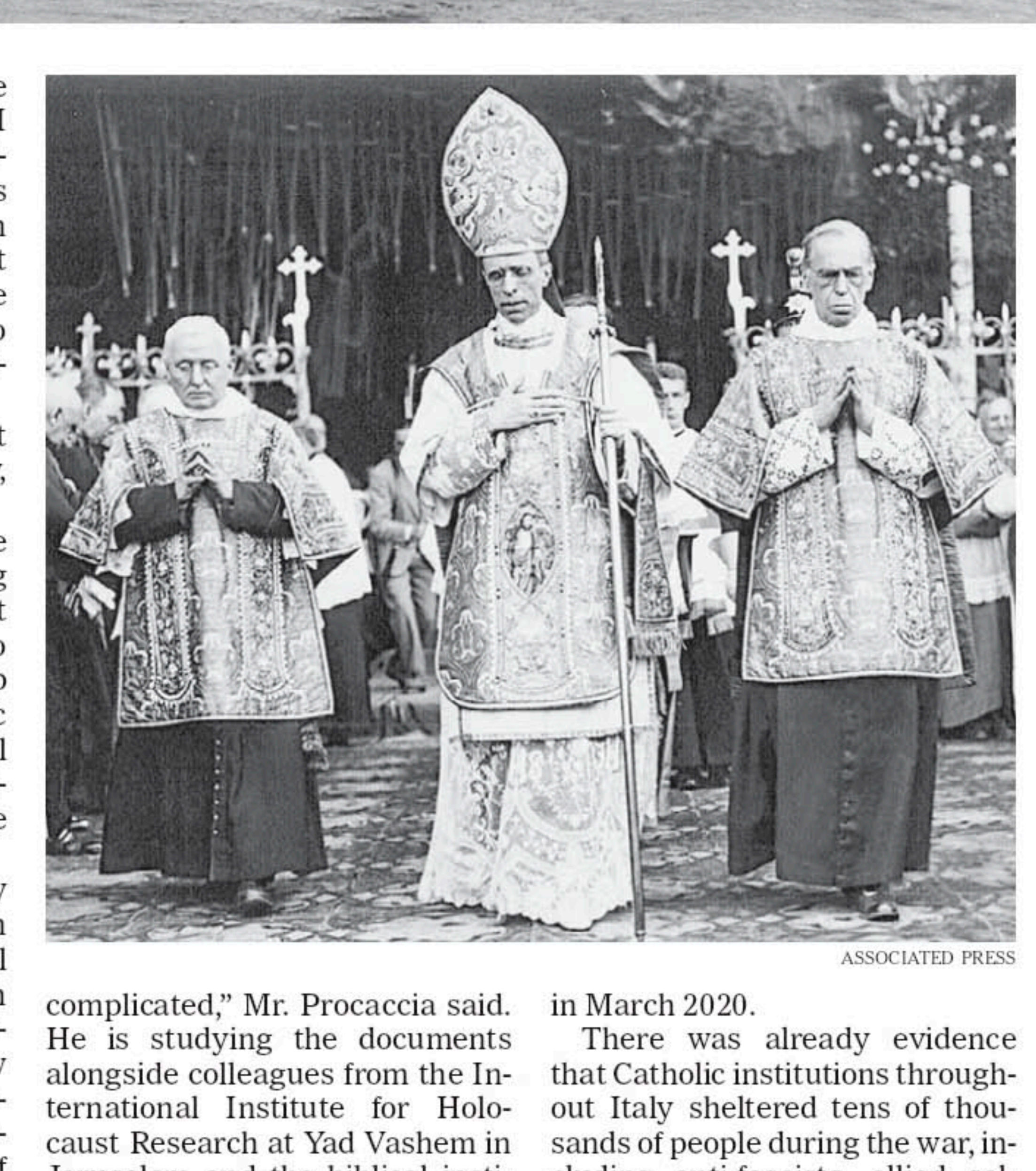
David Kertzer, a Brown University professor who dug up some of that evidence and who has written several books on the popes of the early 20th century, said in a telephone interview that it was "quite clear" to historians that Pius XII "never called on the Catholic institutions in Rome to shelter Jews during the German occupation and, while he was aware that it was happening," he was "quite nervous about it, not wanting to antagonize the German authorities."

Pius "certainly did not want Jews concealed in Vatican City, and very few were," he added.

Defenders of Pius XII, whose case for sainthood is still being evaluated, have long argued that he worked behind the scenes to help Jews. They have chalked up criticism of him to anti-Catholic animus. Other scholars say it will take years to plumb papers referring to Pius and paint a full picture of his papacy.

The documents identified by historians on Thursday have been archived at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, which is affiliated with the Jesuit-run Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. They show that some 4,300 people were sheltered in 155 convents and monasteries during the nine months of the Nazi occupation, according to a statement issued by the historians. The names were not made public out of privacy considerations.

Claudio Procaccia, director of the cultural department of the Jewish Community of Rome, a nonprofit civic group, said that more than 3,200 of these names were Jewish in origin but that research into the documentation, which was presented at a workshop in Rome on Thursday morning, was still in a very early phase.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

American troops near the Coliseum in Rome during World War II, above. Historians praised the discovery, but say it doesn't change the judgment of Pope Pius XII, left.

"Confirmation is always very complicated," Mr. Procaccia said. He is studying the documents alongside colleagues from the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and the biblical institute.

"Obviously, it is a sensitive material that should be treated with due confidentiality and delicacy," he added, saying that possible conversions to Catholicism, which the church welcomed and encouraged, would need to be verified.

Iael Nidam-Orvieto, director of the Yad Vashem institute, said the documents "enable us to ask a lot of questions."

Historical study over Pius's role during World War II has intensified since the Vatican opened its sealed archives on his pontificate in March 2020.

There was already evidence that Catholic institutions throughout Italy sheltered tens of thousands of people during the war, including anti-fascists, allied soldiers fleeing the Nazis, Italian soldiers who went away without leave, and families whose homes had been destroyed. The CDEC foundation had identified the names of about a thousand Jews whom institutions had hosted, said Ms. Picciotto, the historian there.

"Rome was bloated with refugees of every kind, and the church was generous with many of them," Ms. Picciotto said.

But Professor Kertzer of Brown said the archives opened by the Vatican also made clear "that there were plenty of convents that refused to take Jews in," even when the Vatican was asking and even in the case of Jews who had converted, he said. Some religious institutions would shelter Jews only if they were paid.

He said he was "curious" to see the documents identified on Thursday.

A list of the Catholic institutions that sheltered Jews during the Nazi occupation of Rome had been published by the Italian historian Renzo de Felice in the appendix of his 1961 history of Italian Jews under Fascism. "But the entire documentation had been considered lost," said the Rev. Dominik Markl, a professor of Hebrew Bible studies at the University of Innsbruck in Austria and the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

In 2019, Father Markl became aware of the documents the biblical institute announced on Thursday, and he encouraged the collaboration with Yad Vashem and the Jewish civic group in Rome.

"The value consists in the many names," Father Markl said in a telephone interview. "It's a wealth of detailed historical knowledge for historians who deal with the research on this period."

The focus, he said, should be not on Pius, "but on the fate of the many who were persecuted, and those who helped them to survive."

French Court Upholds Ban Of Abayas In Schools

By AURELIEN BREEDEN

PARIS — A top court in France on Thursday upheld a new government decree barring children in public schools from wearing the abaya, a loosefitting, full-length robe worn by some Muslim women, in a blow to critics who had called the ban discriminatory and had filed an emergency petition to strike it down.

The Council of State, France's top administrative court, which has jurisdiction over disputes concerning civil liberties, ruled that the ban was not a "serious and obviously illegal infringement of a fundamental freedom."

Wearing an abaya is part of a "logic of religious affirmation," the court said in a statement, adding that the ban was therefore in line with a French law that "prohibits the wearing by pupils of signs or clothing ostensibly expressing religious affiliation, either in and of themselves, or because of the pupil's behavior."

Since 2004, students have not been able to wear "ostentatious" symbols that have a clear religious meaning, like Catholic crosses, Jewish skullcaps or Muslim head scarves, in middle and high schools.

While the abaya — a long dress that covers the legs and arms but not the hands, feet or head — falls into a grayer area, in France it is mostly worn by Muslim women who want to follow the Quran's teachings on modesty.

Until last week, it was up to individual principals to decide whether the 2004 rules applied. The government said that the nationwide ban was merely an update to the existing rules that was needed to stop a ballooning number of disputes in its secular school system.

The number of incidents in schools related to "laïcité" — France's version of secularism, which guarantees freedom of conscience but also the neutrality of the state and of some public spaces — more than tripled over the last school year compared with the one before, from about 600 to nearly 2,000, according to the French authorities. Many of those incidents related to students' wearing of abayas, the authorities say.

But critics of the ban say it is a discriminatory measure that unfairly polices the clothing of Muslim girls and unnecessarily puts them at the center of yet another political firestorm over the way they dress. Action Droits des Musulmans, a Muslim advocacy group, had filed the emergency petition.

The group said in a statement after Thursday's ruling that it was "deeply concerned about the consequences this decision could have on young girls, who risk being discriminated against on a daily basis because of their ethnic and religious appearance."

The ban, which also applies to similar but less common full-length robes worn by boys, went into effect on Monday as millions of students returned to classes after the summer break.

Gabriel Attal, France's education minister, said that about 300 students arrived at school on Monday morning wearing abayas. Sixty-seven of them were sent home after refusing to take them off, he said.

"I obviously want to enforce rules at school, but a rule has to be explained," Mr. Attal told the BFMTV news channel on Tuesday. He said school officials were in constant "dialogue" with students who refused to comply with the ban, and with their families.

While an overwhelming majority of students have complied with the ban, some question the government's priorities.

In Stains, a northern suburb of Paris, teachers at a local high school organized a protest on Wednesday accusing the government of fueling debates over the abaya instead of funding and renovating their establishment.

Safiatou Baradji, a 10th-grade student who wore a Muslim veil outside of school, said that she had occasionally worn an abaya during the previous school year and insisted that it was "a normal piece of clothing."

But in its ruling, the Council of State noted that in most cases, students who were confronted by school officials for wearing an abaya said they were doing so primarily for religious reasons — meaning that the 2004 law clearly applied.

Noah Sevede, another 10th-grade student in Stains, said most of the students at his school who wore a Muslim veil also wore an abaya outside school, including his sister — who had not wanted to come to class until his parents forced her.

"There are other things that need to be fixed first," he said. "Who are they to tell girls how to dress?"

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed reporting from Stains, France.

Wage Dispute In Spain Spurs Women to Skip Soccer Games

By SARAH HURTES and RACHEL CHAUNDLER

DAVID RAMOS/GETTY IMAGES

Protesters in Barcelona calling for the resignation of Luis Rubiales, the head of Spain's soccer federation, this week.

Female soccer players in Spain are going on strike as the club season begins, representatives from several players' unions confirmed on Thursday, as a dispute over conduct by the head of the country's soccer federation widened into a fight with the soccer clubs over pay.

Early this month, the women's players' union, Futpro, announced that if working conditions did not improve considerably before the start of the season on Friday, the women would not play the matches that are set to begin this weekend.

The dispute is playing out amid broader upheaval in Spanish soccer, with the firing on Tuesday of the women's national soccer coach, Jorge Vilda, whom players had criticized for his domineering management style, and the filing of a criminal complaint against Luis Rubiales, the president of the Royal Spanish Football Federation, by Jennifer Hermoso, a player on the national women's team whom Mr. Rubiales forcibly kissed during a public celebration of the team's World Cup final victory in Australia last month.

Representatives from Liga F, the Spanish women's soccer league that is negotiating on behalf of the clubs, and six players' unions failed to reach an agreement during meetings in Madrid this week, with pay being the biggest point of contention.

"The players are feeling pretty angry," said Amanda Gutiérrez, the head of Futpro. "They want to play, they don't want this war."

Ms. Gutiérrez said that negotiations between the league and the unions have stretched on for 11 months without any progress — a sign, she said, that the league does not take the players seriously.

The current minimum salary for female players in the country is 16,000 euros, or about $17,000, compared with 180,000 euros, or about $192,000, for their male counterparts, according to Spain's chief player union, A.F.E. The players asked for a minimum salary of 23,000 euros for the upcoming season, with the possibility for that salary to increase to 25,000 euros if the league generates more than 8 million euros in sponsor income. But the negotiations came to a halt when the women's league refused to approve a minimum salary of more than 20,000 euros.

Seeking a higher minimum salary, but still far less than men.

The women's league says it cannot afford larger pay increases, citing a long list of expenses, including licenses and refereeing costs. On top of that, it is required to give 20 percent of its sponsorship income to the national soccer federation, which uses the money to promote its nonprofessional categories and develop its soccer programs. A spokeswoman at the National Sports Council said that the requirement for the men's league is no different. But the men's league generates 92 million euros from its sponsors. The women's league earns just 8 million euros a year from its sponsors, according to official government documents.

In a statement on Wednesday, the women's league said the decision to strike was seriously damaging to "the image of Spanish women's football."

Spain's female soccer players have been demanding higher wages and better conditions for years. They reached their first collective bargaining agreement in 2020 and have been pushing to improve conditions ever since. The players are seeking higher wages, contracts that continue during maternity leave and access to the same nutritionists and physical therapists that male players use.

The strike will affect games scheduled for Friday through Sunday, and Sept. 15-17.

Discussions between the league and the unions are expected to continue next week.

"We do not understand the argument that there is no money," Ms. Gutiérrez, the Futpro leader, said, adding that the women's league also earns television rights and receives government funding. "It doesn't hold up."

Palestinian Leader Makes Antisemitic Comments

By PATRICK KINGSLEY

JERUSALEM — Video has emerged of Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, recently asserting that European Jews were persecuted by Hitler because of what he said were their predatory lending practices, rather than their religion.

Mr. Abbas's false claim drew swift condemnation from Israeli and European officials. It also fueled accusations that Mr. Abbas — an architect of interim peace agreements between Israelis and Palestinians in the 1990s — is not genuinely committed to resolving the ongoing conflict.

In a speech late last month, Mr. Abbas said: "They say that Hitler killed the Jews because they were Jews, and that Europe hated the Jews because they were Jews."

"No," Mr. Abbas added. Jews were persecuted, he continued, because of "their social role, which had to do with usury, money, and so on."

Mr. Abbas also repeated a widely discredited theory that European, or Ashkenazi, Jews have no ancient roots in the Middle East. Instead, Mr. Abbas claimed that European Jews were the descendants of a nomadic Turkic tribe that converted to Judaism during the medieval period, and therefore were not victims of antisemitism.

"When we hear them talk about Semitism and antisemitism — the Ashkenazi Jews, at least, are not Semites," Mr. Abbas said.

Mr. Abbas's comments were broadcast live on Palestinian television two weeks ago, in a speech to members of his secular political party, Fatah.

The remarks were brought to a wider audience on Wednesday, when the Middle East Media Research Institute, a Washington-based monitoring group that mainly translates extremist comments by Arab and Iranian leaders, distributed a subtitled version of Mr. Abbas's speech.

Mr. Abbas is the president of the Palestinian Authority, the body that has administered parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank since the 1990s, when the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships signed interim peace accords.

His comments illustrated why he has developed a checkered reputation among Israeli and Western partners. Mr. Abbas was one of the chief negotiators in the peace process, and often is credited with helping to reduce tensions following a wave of violence in the 2000s. At times, he has also described the Holocaust as a crime against humanity.

But Mr. Abbas also has a long history of antisemitic remarks. He made similar comments in 2018 about usury and Ashkenazi Jews, and last year he accused Israel of committing "50 Holocausts" against Palestinians.

In 1984 he published a book in which he condemned the Holocaust but also cited historians who disputed the widely accepted death toll of up to six million Jews.

"This is the true face of Palestinian 'leadership,'" Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Gilad Erdan, wrote on social media in response to Mr. Abbas's latest speech.

"It is no wonder that mere hours ago a Palestinian teenage terrorist hacked innocent Israelis with a meat cleaver," Mr. Erdan added, referring to an attack on Wednesday in the Old City of Jerusalem that wounded at least two.

The European Union said in a statement that Mr. Abbas's "historical distortions are inflammatory, deeply offensive, can only serve to exacerbate tensions in the region and serve no-one's interests."

The statement added: "They play into the hands of those who do not want a two-state solution, which President Abbas has repeatedly advocated for."

Aaron Boxerman contributed reporting.

Florida's Immigration Law May Affect Hurricane Cleanup

Migrants Who Flock To Clear and Rebuild In Disasters See Risk

By MIRIAM JORDAN

When Hurricane Idalia struck last week, Michael Burnett's bayside home in Crystal River, Fla., was inundated with a noxious cocktail of storm water and sewage from burst pipes that rose to his chest.

"We lost everything we owned," Mr. Burnett, the manager of a gun shop, said. "All my kids' clothes, all my guitars, all my guns, everything I have collected is gone."

He added, "The only saving grace was those guys who came to my house."

The "guys" are four undocumented men he hired to help sort through the muck, members of an immigrant work force that in recent years has helped communities in Florida and other states clean up and rebuild after climate disasters, with thousands of such workers rushing in.

But as this year's hurricane season intensifies, they may be in shorter supply in Florida.

In May, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a law to discourage unauthorized immigrants from living and working in the state. The law, which he has described as the country's most aggressive crackdown, rejects out-of-state driver's licenses issued to undocumented immigrants, makes it a felony to transport such immigrants into Florida and punishes companies that hire them.

"There's a lot of work, but we can't risk being deported," said Maria, a Honduran immigrant in Louisiana who worked in Florida after Hurricane Ian last year but said she would forgo traveling there to help with storm cleanup from now on. "We're staying put."

Like other undocumented people interviewed for this article, she asked to be identified only by her first name out of concern for her family's safety.

After the Florida Legislature passed the measure, but even before it took effect on July 1, Maria and other immigrants said they had been harassed by police officers and sheriff's deputies in the state. Now, they expressed fear that law enforcement would arrest them and turn them over to federal authorities for detention and deportation. The office of Mr. DeSantis did not respond to a request for comment on Wednesday about questions over law enforcement or on the impact of immigrants' decisions on hurricane recovery.

Carlos, an undocumented worker who lives in Texas and drives with a license from Maryland, said he usually assembles a crew that clears debris in Florida after hurricanes and then does repairs, installing doors, windows and flooring.

They worked nonstop for seven months in Fort Myers after Hurricane Ian, he said, as one satisfied client after another recommended his crew to friends. But when the Legislature passed the immigration law, he said, they left Florida as quickly as possible.

Although Idalia flooded hundreds of homes and businesses from the Tampa Bay area through Florida's Big Bend region, "we absolutely will not go" help with recovery, Carlos said from Houston, where he has lived for 13 of his 20 years in the United States.

"Imagine being arrested and deported doing work that really helps people," he said, adding, "We have families."

Though it is impossible to know for certain how many undocumented immigrants are staying away, more than half of 1,000 who were informally polled this summer by Resilience Force, a nonprofit group that organizes disaster recovery workers and offers them safety training, said they did not plan to return to Florida this hurricane season because of the law.

"Floridians will need thousands of skilled disaster recovery workers to rebuild their homes after Idalia, but they may not get them," said Saket Soni, executive director of Resilience Force.

"These workers are overwhelmingly immigrants," he said.

Hurricane Idalia came ashore last Wednesday on Florida's Gulf Coast, packing winds of 125 miles per hour that ripped roofs off houses, downed power lines and toppled trees. Surging storm water and torrential rain flooded low-lying places like Crystal River, about 80 miles north of Tampa.

The sheer amount of water overwhelmed the city's sewer system. The pressure was such that, in the Burnett home, water shot out of a toilet like a geyser, puncturing the ceiling and flooding every room. Mr. Burnett, 43, and the family dog, Layla, were trapped inside, the putrid water six feet high by the time firefighters with an airboat rescued them.

When Kelly Burnett, 37, returned to the house with her children, 3 and 7, the family's belongings had been reduced to a "sopping wet mess of crap," she recalled.

"It was overwhelming," she said. "We were literally at a loss."

Mr. Burnett has eczema that is exacerbated by prolonged exposure to bacteria. The couples' elderly parents could not help.

During a visit to Home Depot to buy supplies, he spotted some Latino men holding up a sign that read, "Demolition, restoration and hauling."

Mr. Burnett enlisted their help, and before he was even back home, the men had pulled up at his turquoise house. The workers picked through heaps of toys, clothes and other items, as well as through soggy, crumbling boxes for four days, making a total of $500 per day.

"If they found something in the pile that they thought was sentimental, they brought it to us," said Ms. Burnett — like a photograph of her as a little girl.

Mr. Burnett, who gave the men an extra $500 on their last day working for him, said, "If these people are willing to do this, making a little bit of money helping people they don't know, they should have the world."

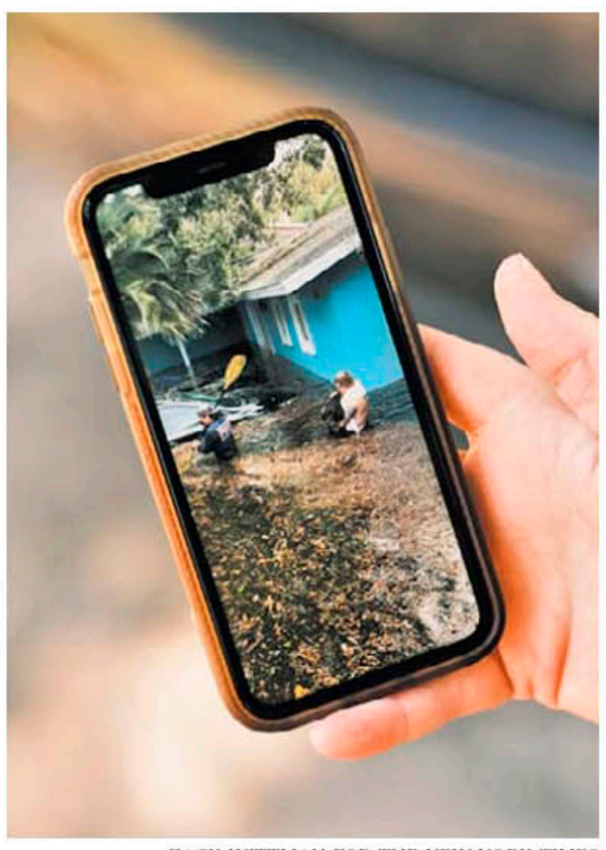
The leader of the group, a man from Honduras named Rogelio who has worked on storm cleanup since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, said they had decided to risk travel to Florida, "trusting in God to protect us."

"There are many homeowners asking for help," he said, "but the workers just aren't here."

ZACK WITTMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Kelly and Mike Burnett with their children, Britt, center, and Bennett, outside their home in Crystal River, Fla. When Hurricane Idalia struck last week, their home was flooded. Undocumented workers helped him sort through the muck.

ZACK WITTMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ZACK WITTMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

'Imagine being arrested and deported doing work that really helps people.'

CARLOS, an undocumented worker who lives in Texas and usually assembles a crew to clear debris in Florida after hurricanes and help with subsequent repairs.

DANIELLE VILLASANA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Migrants Headed North Long Before Governors Began to Bus Them There

By MIRIAM JORDAN and EDGAR SANDOVAL

When a bus packed with migrants pulled into downtown Los Angeles in mid-June, it caused a local stir: In a city with one of the country's largest immigrant populations, this was the first busload to arrive courtesy of the Texas governor, Greg Abbott.

This week, the 12th such bus arrived in Los Angeles, part of the Texas governor's determination to share the responsibility of caring for newly arrived migrants with Democratic politicians who have supported a more welcoming national immigration policy.

Both the Texas governor and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida have offered migrants free rides from border towns to New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and several other cities since last year. The arrivals have overwhelmed some cities, straining shelters and aid resources.

"It is abhorrent that an American elected official is using human beings as pawns in his cheap political games," Mayor Karen Bass of Los Angeles said of the busing program in June.

But the reality is that the number of migrants offered free passage from Texas over the past year is a fraction of those who regularly make their way from the southern border to cities around the country — to places where there are jobs, family connections and networks of other immigrants from their homelands. And it has been that way for years.

Of the roughly 11 million undocumented immigrants now living in all 50 states, according to demographers' estimates, most began their new lives with a trip from a border city or airport — usually paid for by a relative, an aid group or their own savings, not the Texas governor.

What was Abbott's plan?

Intent on highlighting the large number of people crossing the border in recent years, which he blames on the Biden administration's immigration policies, Mr. Abbott devised a plan to approach migrants after they had been processed by the border authorities and offer them free rides on chartered buses.

"I'm going to take the border to President Biden," he said at a news conference after introducing his plan in April 2022.

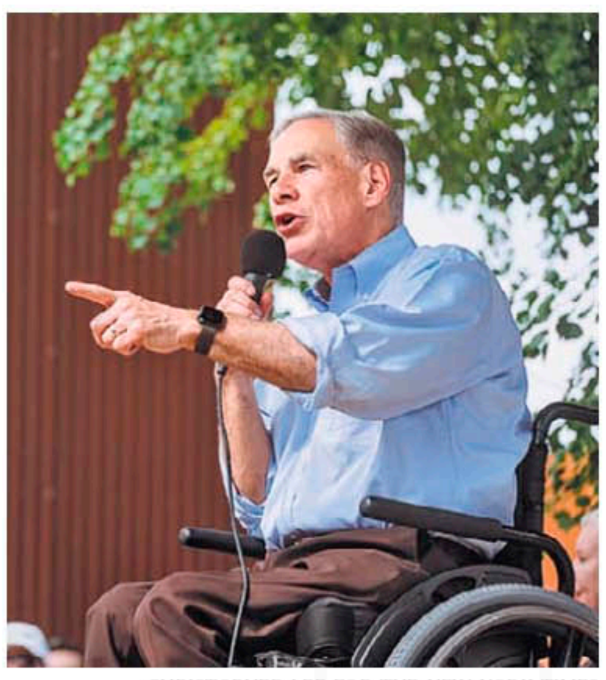
Many migrants have been grateful for the free transportation, because they often have little money left by the time they complete a monthslong trek to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Lever Alejos, a Venezuelan delivered to Washington, D.C., last July, said, "I feel fortunate the governor put me on a bus to Washington." He has found work and started sending money and gifts to his young son back home. He recently bought a car.

Does everyone ride the buses?

No. In fact, the migrants boarding the Texas-funded buses represent only a fraction of the thousands arriving at the border each month, and some migrants are wary of accepting a free ride.

The Texas busing program has sent about 34,740 migrants to other states since April of 2022, enough to populate a small city. But that is a paltry subset of the hundreds of thousands who have crossed the border during that period, most of whom have probably also made their way to destinations outside Texas.



CHRISTOPHER LEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas has sent about 34,740 migrants to other states by bus since April 2022 in a program that is funded by the state.

New York alone has received more than 100,000 migrants in the last year; only 13,100 were sent on buses provided by the state of Texas.

What's more, many migrants are crossing the border every day in Arizona, California, New Mexico and even parts of Texas where no free bus service is available. After being released by the border authorities, they typically arrange travel on their own to their U.S. destinations.

Thousands of immigrants a year take Greyhound buses from Tucson, San Diego and San Antonio, and some of them take commercial flights, which they can board as long as they have identification. They pay for the transportation themselves, or relatives or friends already in the country buy tickets for them. In some cases, charity groups or volunteers offer money or mile vouchers for migrant travel.

Then why is there such a sudden strain on resources in some cities?

Migrants arriving on the free buses tend to be needier than others. That reflects a change in the composition of migrants who have been crossing the border over the past two years. A large share of those riding the Texas buses are Venezuelans fleeing economic hardship and political turmoil.

In contrast to Mexicans and Central Americans, who have been migrating to the United States for decades, Venezuelans are unlikely to have friends and family members to receive them because their wave of migration is a new phenomenon.

With no money and no family, Venezuelans have overwhelmed nonprofit organizations and volunteer groups since spring last year. Because they have no connections in the United States, Venezuelans are also more likely to want to travel to a big city, like New York, where they expect to find jobs and assistance.

Venezuelans comprise the majority of migrants staying in homeless shelters in New York. They continue to arrive, although numbers have dropped in recent months.

The large numbers of Haitians arriving recently have also proved taxing for some cities, because many of them also arrive with few resources of their own.

New York City and Massachusetts are especially strained by the influx of migrants because they have right-to-shelter laws requiring the provision of shelter to people who request it, although in Massachusetts, it applies only to families with children, and to pregnant women.

Why are some migrants remaining in homeless shelters for months?

Most migrants who cross the border are seeking asylum in the United States, but they are not eligible to apply for work permits until about six months after they have filed petitions requesting protection. The large number of applications has also created a backlog.

Without employment authorization, it is difficult to secure work. Some migrants find jobs in the informal economy or are paid cash to do blue-collar work. But even then, it takes time for them to save enough money to rent a place, and landlords often require proof of income and other documentation that they do not have.

What other assistance do the migrants receive?

Families can receive food, medical care and other assistance, depending on the state. Children, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to enroll in public schools everywhere.

For New York alone, the cost of assisting the migrants is in the billions of dollars. The financial burden imposed by the newcomers has prompted leaders in New York, Illinois and Massachusetts to declare states of emergency, urging the federal government to provide resources.

Process to Redraw Council Map Got Ugly Fast

Newcomer's Triumph in Los Angeles Fades in Bitter Political Feud Behind the Redistricting Process

From Page A1

ence by council members directly undermined some of the very goals the politicians said they were trying to achieve.

As the city prepares this fall to look closely at what lessons were learned from the scandal-ridden process, The New York Times conducted dozens of interviews with redistricting commissioners, council members, neighborhood leaders and experts on voting rights to understand the ultimate outcomes of the closed-door maneuvering. Maps of the various district configurations were analyzed to examine their impacts on race and other demographics.

In instance after instance, the review showed, the recommendations of the commission appointed to review district boundaries — advice based on months of neighborhood meetings, expert studies and comments from the community — were largely ignored as the council pushed through a map that would help re-elect the incumbents.

The council members on the audio all largely maintained their existing districts — Ms. Martinez's constituency remained nearly 100 percent intact — as did at least six other council members.

The city made no progress at all on one of its chief original aims — to build fairer representation for Latinos, who currently make up about half the city's population but hold about a third of the council seats.

A longstanding goal of unifying Koreatown, which had historically been split across four council districts, was accomplished. But many residents there who had helped elect Ms. Raman — an important base of the renters she wanted to mobilize — no longer had her as their councilwoman.

"This all felt counter to the political explosion that got me here in the first place," Ms. Raman said. "Eleven months after a very democratic process, a very undemocratic process takes hold."

Frank Cardenas, who was the redistricting commission's executive director, said he was "disgusted" at how an effort that involved the participation of some 15,000 Angelenos was so abruptly set aside.

"Thousands of people got vested in the process of designing their city only to have their work and efforts pissed on by the council," he said. "Here we have elected officials literally playing games with them while inviting them to be part of a democratic process — only to become authoritarian on them at the end. It was a breathtaking bait and switch."

Several of the eight council members who spoke with The Times about the redistricting process said their interventions to prevent large changes to their districts were intended to protect the will of the people who had voted for them.

"The common interest we had was in preventing our constituents from being completely taken away from the council member they voted for," said Paul Krekorian, who is now City Council president.

But in a City Council election campaign this spring, held to fill the seat vacated by Ms. Martinez, much of the blame was pointed at the Council itself.

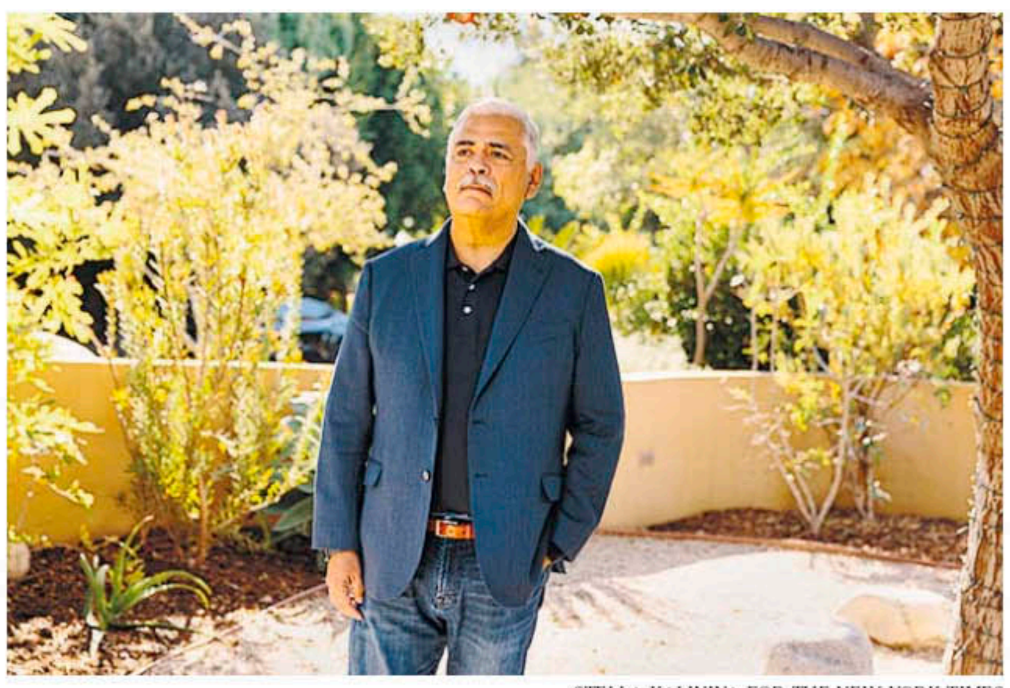
"Neighborhoods like the one I live in, Sun Valley, were carved up for political purposes, not for empowering constituents," said Imelda Padilla, a community organizer who was elected to the council in June. "These public officials were in that room discussing the consolidation of their own individual power, not equitable political representation."

A goal of being inclusive

Los Angeles is home to one of the country's biggest immigrant populations and a network of stunningly disparate neighborhoods — the mansions of Brentwood, the high-rises of Century City, the suburbs of the San Fernando Valley and the dense urban communities of Watts, Boyle Heights and Echo Park.

Nowhere in the country do City Council members preside over fiefs so large: 15 council members represent about 264,900 people each. To put it in perspective, this is one-and-a-half times the size of City Council districts in New York and five times more than those in Chicago. A single council district in Los Angeles is more populous than the vast majority of California cities.

Racial and ethnic groups have spent decades jostling for power and building coalitions, and the redrawing of the city's political map has often exposed fault lines and simmering conflicts. The redistricting process is overseen by a commission that is supposed to be independent, yet the members are appointed by council members who can also ignore whatever recommendations the commission makes.

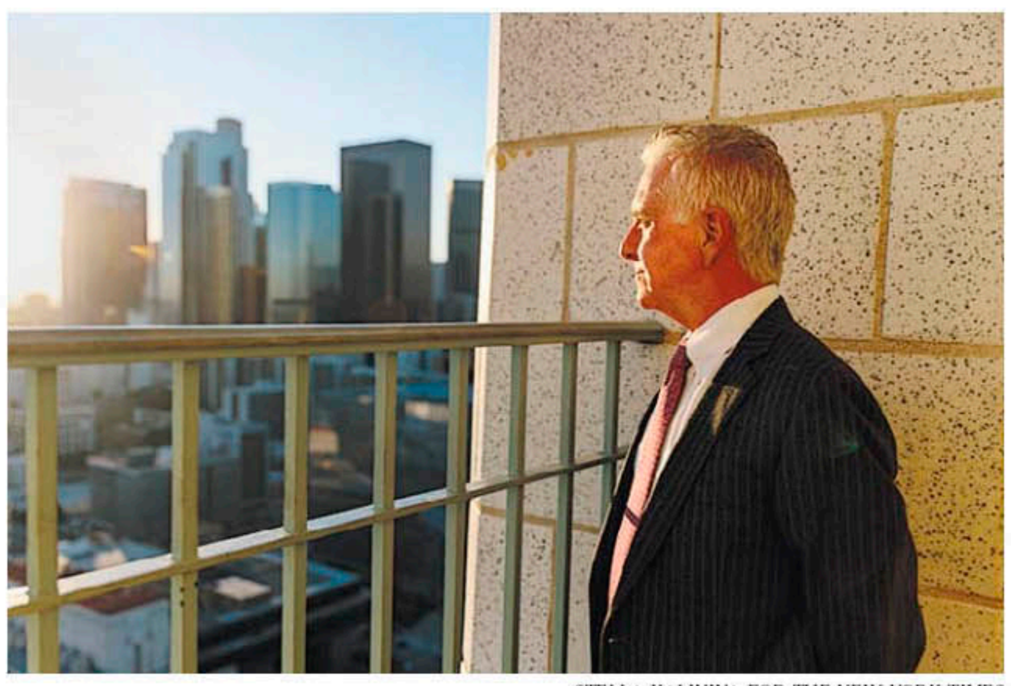


STELLA KALININA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

FRANK CARDENAS The redistricting commission's executive director felt the City Council overstepped in its interventions.

STELLA KALININA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

NITHYA RAMAN A newcomer to the Council, she lost 40 percent of her constituency, more than any other member.



STELLA KALININA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

PAUL KREKORIAN The City Council president said the goal was to keep constituents from losing the members they had voted for.

A pop-up amusement park in Koreatown, top, which with its 100,000 residents in less than three square miles, is one of the country's most densely populated neighborhoods.

15

Los Angeles City Council members who represent about 264,900 people each, making a single council district more populous than the vast majority of California cities.

As things got underway in November 2020, the commission staff began urging neighborhoods to participate and submit their own possible maps. "We need to hear about what you believe makes up your community," a commission flier said. "Tell us about the schools, churches, parks and shopping areas. Tell us about the people."

Faced with the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, organizers set up webcams around the city — some outdoors and some in large community centers — and more than 1,450 speakers ultimately provided testimony.

"We had assembly lines of people giving public testimony," said Rafael González, who was the commission's director of community outreach and engagement.

Maria-Isabel Rutledge, a 70-year-old resident of the 8th Council District in South Los Angeles, said residents there were trying to reverse a neighborhood decline she said had been exacerbated by a bout of political horse trading during the redistricting of 2012, when the University of Southern California and Exposition Park — magnets for jobs and spending in the community — were both moved from the 8th district into the 9th.

In the decade afterward, Ms. Rutledge said, businesses shut down, and streetlights and roads were not repaired as quickly. An alley near her house was left perpetually muddy.

So in 2021, she and her fellow activists pushed for the return of U.S.C.

Even bigger conflicts emerged in Koreatown, the place where Ms. Raman's troubles started.

The neighborhood's more than 100,000 people — including working-class immigrants from around the world — live in a mix of aging apartment buildings and luxurious new high-rises alongside bustling strip malls, bars and restaurants, all packed into an area less than three square miles that is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the country.

The area, west of downtown, had been split among four council districts — one of them Ms. Raman's — meaning that for decades, it had never had a single council member to represent its collective interests. Though a majority of Koreatown's residents are now Latino, Asian residents there had long pushed for more direct representation.

But consolidating 100,000 people into one district would require hefty adjustments, and Ms. Raman was poised to lose about 17,000 Koreatown residents, some of whom had been among her strongest supporters.

Drawing boundary lines is typically a rough-and-tumble process, and several council members nominated local heavyweights, including former lawmakers and lobbyists, as their representatives on the redistricting commission. Ms. Raman stayed true to her roots by naming a relative political outsider, Alexandra Suh, who leads the nonprofit Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance.

But when the commission broke into groups to focus on different areas of the city, Ms. Suh was grouped with commissioners from the city's Westside, and she felt she was left out of many discussions on how Koreatown might be carved up.

"It was clear that people had come in with agendas," Ms. Suh said.

As the map developed, Ms. Raman and Mr. Krekorian, who was already due to leave the Council in 2024 because of term limits, were offered two alternative districts. One of them would lose the entire population of voters who had elected them only a year earlier. The other alternative showed Ms. Raman losing about 70 percent of her constituents.

Fred Ali, who was the chairman of the redistricting commission, said that Ms. Raman's district was located in the center of the city and none of the goals the commission was trying to achieve — accommodating population shifts westward, uniting Koreatown, building better Latino representation in the San Fernando Valley — could be accomplished without significant changes in that center.

But David Ely, a redistricting consultant for the Council, said it was his impression that Ms. Raman was vulnerable because she was a political newcomer.

"She was perceived as the one least able to defend herself," Mr. Ely said. "She wasn't strongly connected and not part of any power blocks on the Council."

Jonathan Mehta Stein, the executive director of California Common Cause, which closely monitored the redistricting process, said he believed there was also a larger political goal: "They pulled her base out from under her to have her turn down the volume on behalf of renters," he said.

Ms. Suh tried to introduce alternatives that would preserve more of Ms. Raman's district, but to no avail.

That's when Ms. Raman decided that she would need a new strategy. "Raman was wrestling a pig," Mr. Stein said of the process, "and she had to get in the mud herself."

Joining the fray

Ms. Suh was thanked for her help, and told she was being replaced.

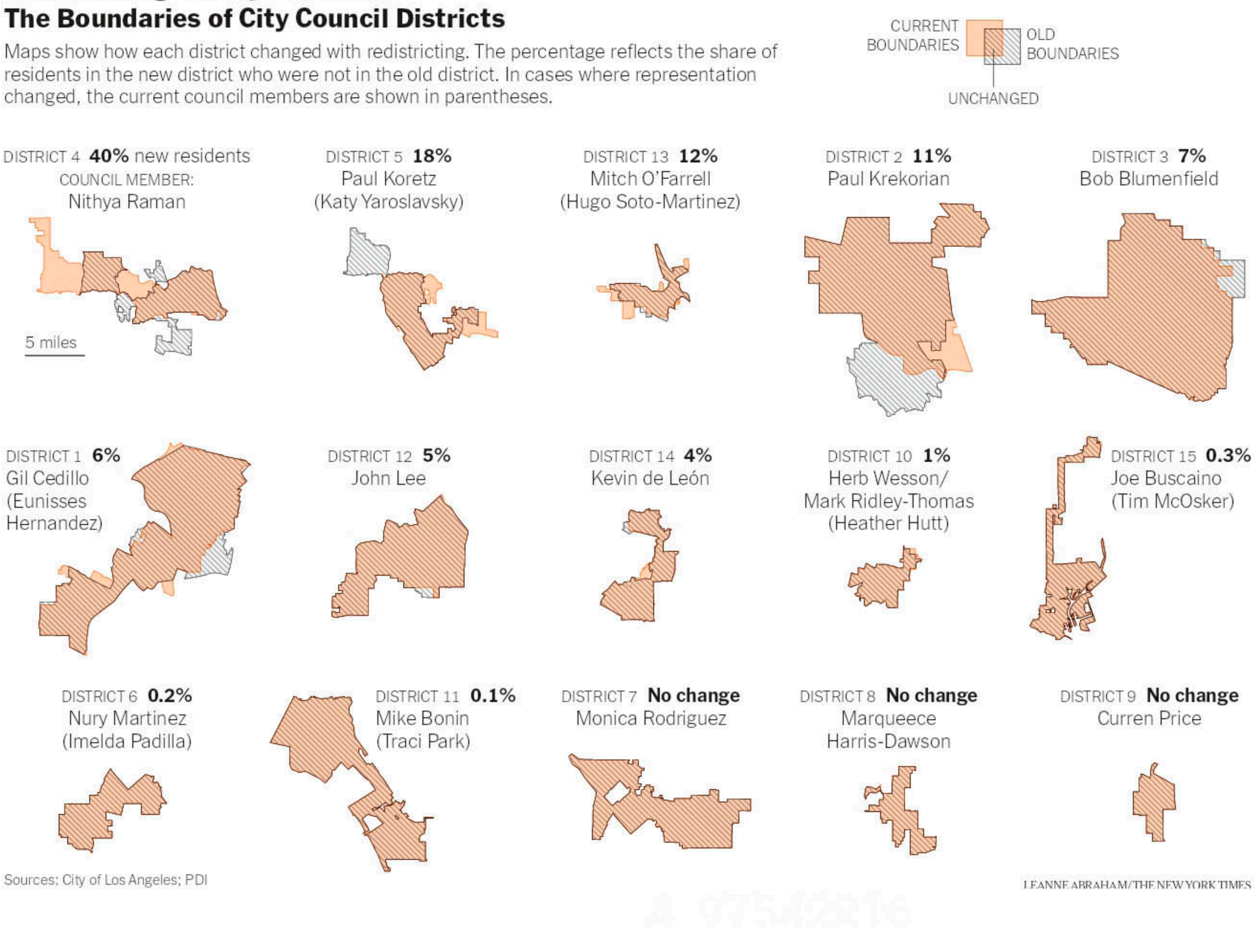
Enter Ms. Goldberg, a veteran Los Angeles politician — the city's first openly gay City Council member, a three-term member of the State Assembly and a two-time member of the Los Angeles Board of Education.

"Alexandra did not have the political know-how compared to an old political hand like Jackie," Ms. Raman recalled. "Unfortunately, I felt like I needed a warrior like her."

Ms. Goldberg was a veteran of many past political realignments. "I have voted in six council districts," she said. "And I've been in

Redistricting Mostly Preserved The Boundaries of City Council Districts

Maps show how each district changed with redistricting. The percentage reflects the share of residents in the new district who were not in the old district. In cases where representation changed, the current council members are shown in parentheses.



Sources: City of Los Angeles; PDI

LEANNE ABRAHAM/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Michael Wines contributed reporting. Kirsten Noyes, Susan C. Beachy, Sheelagh McNeill and Kitty Bennett contributed research.

MARK ABRAMSON

Pelosi Suggests Sexism Is at the Root of Calls For Feinstein to Resign

By ANJALI HUYNH

Former Speaker Nancy Pelosi defended Senator Dianne Feinstein for remaining in office after a series of health issues, dismissing concerns about Ms. Feinstein's continued ability to serve as a sexist double standard.

Speaking to Politico for an article published Thursday, Ms. Pelosi stressed that the California senator, a longtime colleague and neighbor, was "doing OK" and minimized Ms. Feinstein's recent fall, for which she was briefly hospitalized, as a "very little fall, it was like nothing."

She suggested that the criticisms of Ms. Feinstein, 90, and questions related to her eventual retirement were gendered.

"It's OK, you know, they can vote, and it's all they need to do," Ms. Pelosi, 83, said of the rationalizations offered for male elected officials who have faced age-related health concerns. "And then Dianne comes along and then they're making such a fuss? Uh-uh. It's a guy thing, but that's the way the world is."

(The health woes that kept Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi absent from the Senate were well documented. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, who is 89, has also faced scrutiny about his age.)

Recent incidents involving older politicians have again prompted uncomfortable debate about how old is too old to stay in public office.

In July, a video circulated of Ms. Feinstein appearing confused when asked to vote in committee — which followed an illness that kept her away from Washington for over two months that was more serious than her office publicly disclosed.

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the longtime Republican leader, had two recent moments when he was captured freezing midsentence. Though Republicans largely rallied around Mr. McConnell, a handful expressed concerns: Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, 43, said the G.O.P. couldn't "have it both ways" while attacking President Biden, 80, as enfeebled. Mr. Biden, meanwhile, was among the first to offer words of support to Mr. McConnell.

A spokesman for Ms. Pelosi declined to comment further.

Ms. Feinstein, who has faced calls to retire from those in her own party, including members of Congress, has maintained she will serve out the remainder of her term but will not run for reelection in 2024. The race to fill her seat is already crowded.

Ms. Pelosi has served in the House for close to four decades, and stepped down from leading House Democrats at the beginning of this Congress after nearly 20 years at the helm. However, she remained in office.

Nancy Pelosi

She left the door open to running for her congressional seat again after raising millions of dollars in the first half of this year, according to Politico: "I haven't been thinking much about it yet, but I will. When I need to, I will." At another point, she said encouragement to run again was something she has "been hearing constantly."

Ms. Pelosi has also defended Mr. Biden when it comes to his age and the Republican attacks on his competency. Democratic voters, in poll after poll, indicate that Mr. Biden's age is among their biggest concerns as he prepares for a re-election fight. The front-runner in the Republican primary, former President Donald J. Trump, is 77.

On Monday, Ms. Pelosi rejected concerns about Mr. Biden's age. She told the BBC's Stephen Sackur that "Joe Biden is wise," adding that, "he has strategic thinking about getting things done — that's why his presidency has been so successful on the domestic front."

the same house for 30 years."

By the time she was brought in to help salvage Ms. Raman's district, she said, "it was clear the fix was in."

"I got there too late," she said.

As she saw it, Ms. Raman's election represented a threat to the "liberal Democrat" status quo that was roiling Democratic politics across the country. "Nithya is a leftist," she said, part of a wave of "new, young people who think we can do more."

Ms. Goldberg's entry on Ms. Raman's behalf turned what had been a difficult process into a highly contentious one, several commissioners said, as she accused fellow commissioners of drawing boundaries that were racist and insisted on preserving more of Ms. Raman's district.

"The power of her anger was visible," Mr. Cardenas, the executive director, said of Ms. Goldberg.

Several other council members also brought in new appointees — for political and other reasons — and soon, the Council was getting even more involved.

Mr. Ali said he started to receive calls from Ackley Padilla, the chief of staff for Ms. Martinez, who had appointed Mr. Ali to the commission.

Initially, the calls were "questions about process and plans for upcoming meetings," Mr. Ali said. "And then there were calls with specific questions about particular map configurations, such as why certain changes were being made." Ultimately, he said, "I was being asked to consider other configurations."

Mr. Padilla said his phone calls were part of the normal process of guiding the deliberations. "Providing input was both ordinary and appropriate," he said.

In October 2021, the commission finally released its plan for the city, dubbed the "K2.5" map. The commission said it achieved a number of goals: It would keep more neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves whole; the San Fernando Valley's growth would be recognized by the creation of five council districts entirely in the Valley; Koreatown would be unified; and Black and Latino voter power would be "maintained, and in some cases, strengthened."

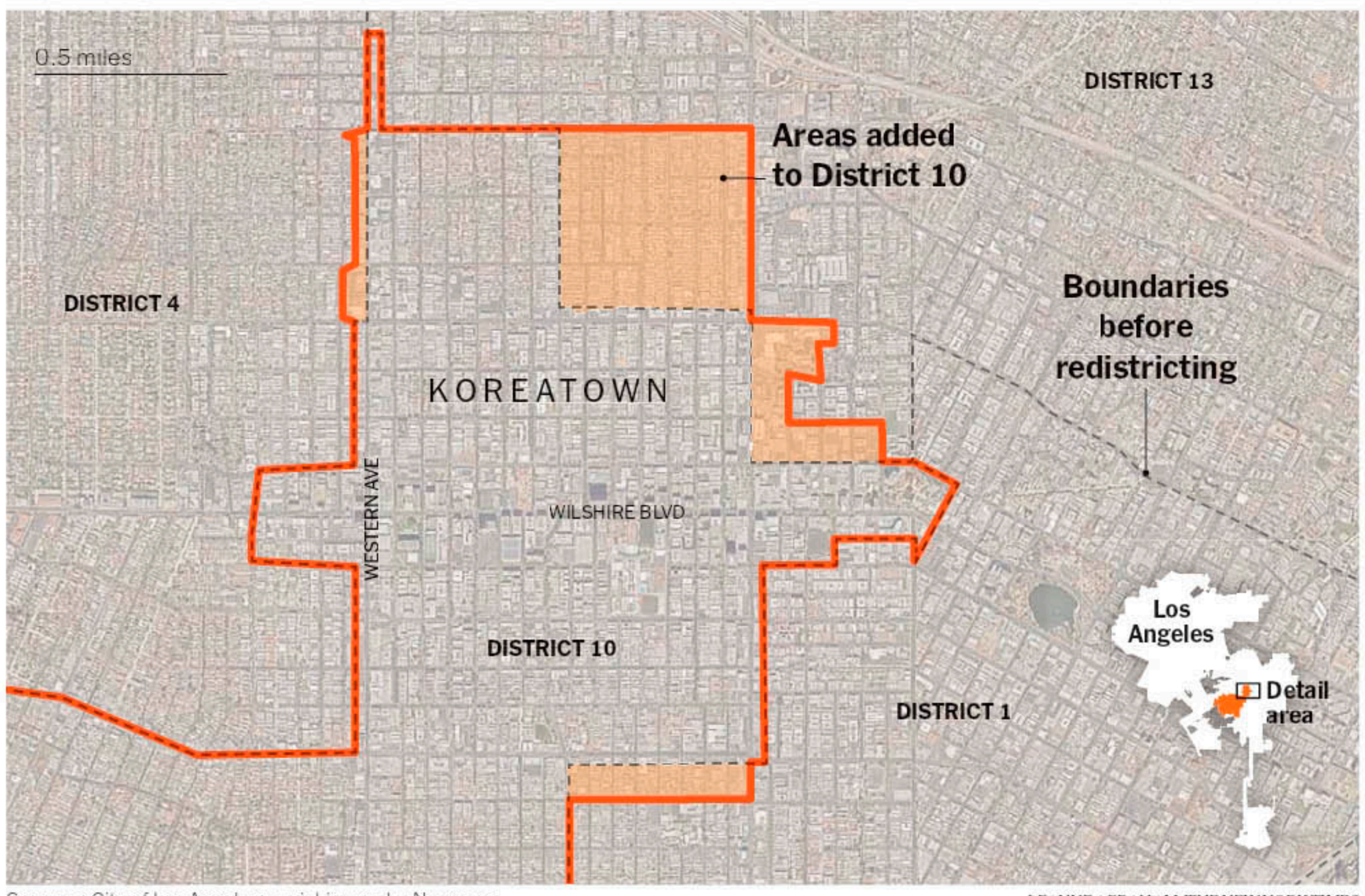
The final lines of Ms. Raman's district were left for the City Council to decide, an acknowledgment that the decision, ultimately, would be a political one.

Richard Polanco, a former State Senate majority leader who was council member Gilbert Cedillo's appointee, said he thought the map "addressed the needs of Los Angeles" and that he had expected the Council to adopt it.

"We did our jobs and shame on them," he said.

Impact of Redistricting on Koreatown

Once split across four Council Districts, the Koreatown neighborhood was unified in District 10.



Sources: City of Los Angeles; aerial image by Nearmap

LEANNE ABRAHAM/THE NEW YORK TIMES

'Neighborhoods like the one I live in, Sun Valley, were carved up for political purposes, not for empowering constituents.'

IMELDA PADILLA, a community organizer who was elected to the City Council in June.

The gloves come off

The City Council, charged at that point with adopting or tweaking the commission's map, proceeded in a series of 38 motions to redraw it entirely. The effect of these changes, The Times analysis shows, was to return to a map that closely resembled what had been drawn during the last redistricting in 2012 — the point where they had all started.

While Ms. Raman did not lose her entire district, she lost about 40 percent of her constituency, more than any other council member. The hope of creating a new Latino-majority district went nowhere in the end; the city ended up with exactly the same number of Latino-majority districts as it had in 2012.

U.S.C. stayed exactly where it was, despite the efforts of Ms. Rutledge and her neighbors.

And attempts to more fairly realign one of the fastest-growing areas of the city, the San Fernando Valley, were undermined when Ms. Martinez, the former council president who had been heard scheming on the audio recording, fought back the commission's plan to move Van Nuys Airport and the Sepulveda Basin — a possible venue location for the 2028 Olympics — out of her district.

In the chaotic days after the audio was leaked, council members scrambled to demonstrate their support for redistricting reform — though they quickly opposed a proposal in the State Legislature to take the whole process out of their hands.

In June, a group of academics that studied the recent problems, advised adding 10 more seats to the City Council, in addition to establishing truly independent redistricting commissions for both the council and the school board.

Now, after months of listening sessions held around town, City Council leaders say they plan to put the two questions to voters next year, with the precise details to be discussed this fall.

Creating more seats, many experts say, could also potentially reduce corruption. Los Angeles has seen a parade of scandals at City Hall, often tied to the power that council members wield over commerce and land development in such large districts.

Mark Ridley-Thomas, who was set to represent the newly unified Koreatown, in March became the third council member in less than four years to be convicted on corruption charges and was sentenced last week to 42 months in prison. Curren Price, the council member who had managed to hold on to U.S.C. and Exposition Park, was charged in June with embezzlement, perjury and conflict of interest. He has vigorously denied any wrongdoing.

Sara Sadhwani, an assistant politics professor at Pomona College who was part of the academic panel that suggested reforms, said that a narrow window for change could close soon as last year's audio scandal fades from memory and public pressure diminishes.

"It's a rare thing to see a council member or any legislator that has such a power have a willingness to relinquish it," she said.

District Can't Notify Parents If Their Child Is Transgender

By ANNA BETTS

A superior court judge on Wednesday temporarily blocked a Southern California school district from notifying parents if their child seeks to change pronouns or gender identity.

Background: The school board approved the policy in July.

The Chino Valley Unified School District approved a policy in July that requires officials to notify parents if their child asks to use a name or pronoun that does not align with the child's birth certificate, or seeks to use a bathroom assigned to a different gender.

At the end of August, California's attorney general, Rob Bonta, filed a lawsuit in San Bernardino Superior Court against the school district, asking for a temporary injunction that would immediately stop the policy as well as a permanent order blocking it thereafter.

Mr. Bonta argued that the policy infringed on several state protections for students' civil and constitutional rights, which include the right of access to public education and the right to privacy. The attorney general, a Democrat, said the school district policy amounted to the "forced outing" of transgender students.

Why it matters: The temporary ruling could deter other districts.

The temporary ruling by Judge Thomas S. Garza indicated that the court might ultimately decide against Chino Valley Unified and prevented officials from notifying parents in the interim.

It also might deter other school districts in California from imposing similar requirements. In recent weeks, the Anderson Union High School District in Northern California and the Murrieta Valley and Temecula Valley unified school districts in the Inland Empire have enacted policies similar to the one enacted by Chino Valley Unified.

Orange Unified School District board members are also scheduled to consider a transgender notification policy on Thursday.

In a statement, Andrea Johnston, the spokeswoman for the Chino Valley Unified School District, said that while the "staff respects the temporary ruling to suspend implementation of certain portions of the district's parent notification policy, personnel will continue to fulfill its purpose of creating and maintaining a collaborative relationship between school and home."

Mr. Bonta lauded the court's decision and said the temporary restraining order "rightfully upholds the state rights of our L.G.B.T.Q.+ student community and protects kids from harm by immediately halting the board's forced outing policy."

What's next: Proceedings will continue in the case.

Nearly a month into its school year, the Chino Valley Unified School District must shelve its notification policy and await further court proceedings.

The next hearing is scheduled for Oct. 13.

MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rob Bonta, California's attorney general, won a temporary ruling against a policy that he likened to a "forced outing."

Surprise Medicare Fact: It's Costing Less Than Expected

By MARGOT SANGER-KATZ and ALICIA PARLAPIANO

For decades, runaway Medicare spending was the story of the federal budget.

Now, flat Medicare spending might be a bigger one.

Something strange has been happening in this giant federal program. Instead of growing and growing, as it always had before, spending per Medicare beneficiary has nearly leveled off over more than a decade.

The trend can be a little hard to see because, as baby boomers have aged, the number of people using Medicare has grown. But it has had enormous consequences for federal spending. Budget news often sounds apocalyptic, but the Medicare trend has been unexpectedly good for federal spending, saving taxpayers a huge amount relative to projections.

"Without a doubt, this is the most important thing that has happened to the federal budget in the last 20 years," said David Cutler, a professor of health policy and medicine at Harvard, who helped the Obama White House develop the Affordable Care Act.

The reason for the per-person slowdown is a bit of a mystery. Scholars have been arguing about it for years, but no one seems sure enough to confidently predict whether it is likely to stick around for much longer.

Some of the reductions are easy to explain. Congress changed Medicare policy. The biggest such shift came with the Affordable Care Act in 2010, which reduced Medicare's payments to hospitals and to health insurers that offered private Medicare Advantage plans. Congress also cut Medicare payments as part of a budget deal in 2011.

But most of the savings can't be attributed to any obvious policy shift. In a recent letter to the Senate Budget Committee, economists at the Congressional Budget Office described the huge reductions in its Medicare forecasts between 2010 and 2020. Most of those reductions came from a category the budget office calls "technical adjustments," which it uses to describe changes to public health and the practice of medicine itself.

Older Americans appear to be having fewer heart attacks and strokes, the likely result of effective cholesterol and blood pressure medicines that became cheap and widely used in recent years, according to research from Professor Cutler and colleagues. And drug makers and surgeons haven't developed as many new blockbuster treatments recently — there has been no new Prozac or angioplasty to drive up spending. (Medicare is currently barred by statute from covering the new class of expensive anti-obesity drugs.)

Parts of the health system appear to have become more efficient, as medical providers have been more cautious about adopting new therapies that don't have much evidence behind them, and more care has shifted outside hospitals into cheaper settings.

"What I've been arguing for more than a decade now is something that's very difficult to quantify but is nonetheless real," said Melinda Buntin, who measured the trend as a deputy assistant director at the Congressional Budget Office, and now studies it as a professor at Johns Hopkins. Professor Buntin says the direction of recent federal policies and choices by private insurers have caused doctors, nurses and hospital administrators to become more cost-conscious.

That budgetary good news isn't all good news for people with Medicare. Reductions in heart attacks and strokes have had big benefits for public health, but the paucity of major medical breakthroughs has been accompanied by slowing improvements in life expectancy for seniors. The cost containment strategies in hospitals may mean patients have been denied the treatments of their choice.

Medicare may even wind up saving money because of Covid-19 — because the older Americans who died from the disease tended to have other illnesses that would have been expensive to treat if they had survived, according to an analysis from the Medicare actuary.

If Medicare spending had grown the way it had for much of its history, federal spending would have been $3.9 trillion higher since 2011, and deficits would have been more than a quarter larger, according to an Upshot analysis. The difference is more than could be saved by raising the eligibility age for Social Security or converting Medicaid into a block grant, controversial proposals raised by legislators concerned about the federal debt.

It's so much money that almost no major legislation passed during this period comes close in scale. Even some major deficit reduction proposals, like the one known as Simpson-Bowles, aren't much bigger. The Trump tax cuts cost an estimated $2 trillion over 10 years. The recent deficit reduction deal passed by Congress will save a relatively modest trillion dollars in comparison. A new Medicare policy that will allow it to negotiate on the prices of some prescription drugs is expected to save just under $100 billion over a decade.

"There is basically no recent history of the kind of actual budgetary savings similar to what we have seen with the Medicare spending slowdown," said Joshua Gordon, the director of health care policy at the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a group that supports deficit reduction.

Those savings have affected Congress's appetite for other budgetary choices. Medicare itself might look very different if it had been consistently busting the budget. In 2011, near the beginning of the trend, congressional Republicans were talking seriously about changing the very structure of Medicare by converting it into a private voucher program to constrain its future cost. Mitt Romney's presidential platform in 2012 featured such a plan. Proposals of that sort have fallen out of favor in recent years.

The fact that spending has remained so much lower than expected "has allowed us to put these decisions off for a while," said Sherry Glied, the dean of the Wagner School of public service at N.Y.U., who has evaluated several proposed long-term options for managing Medicare's finances.

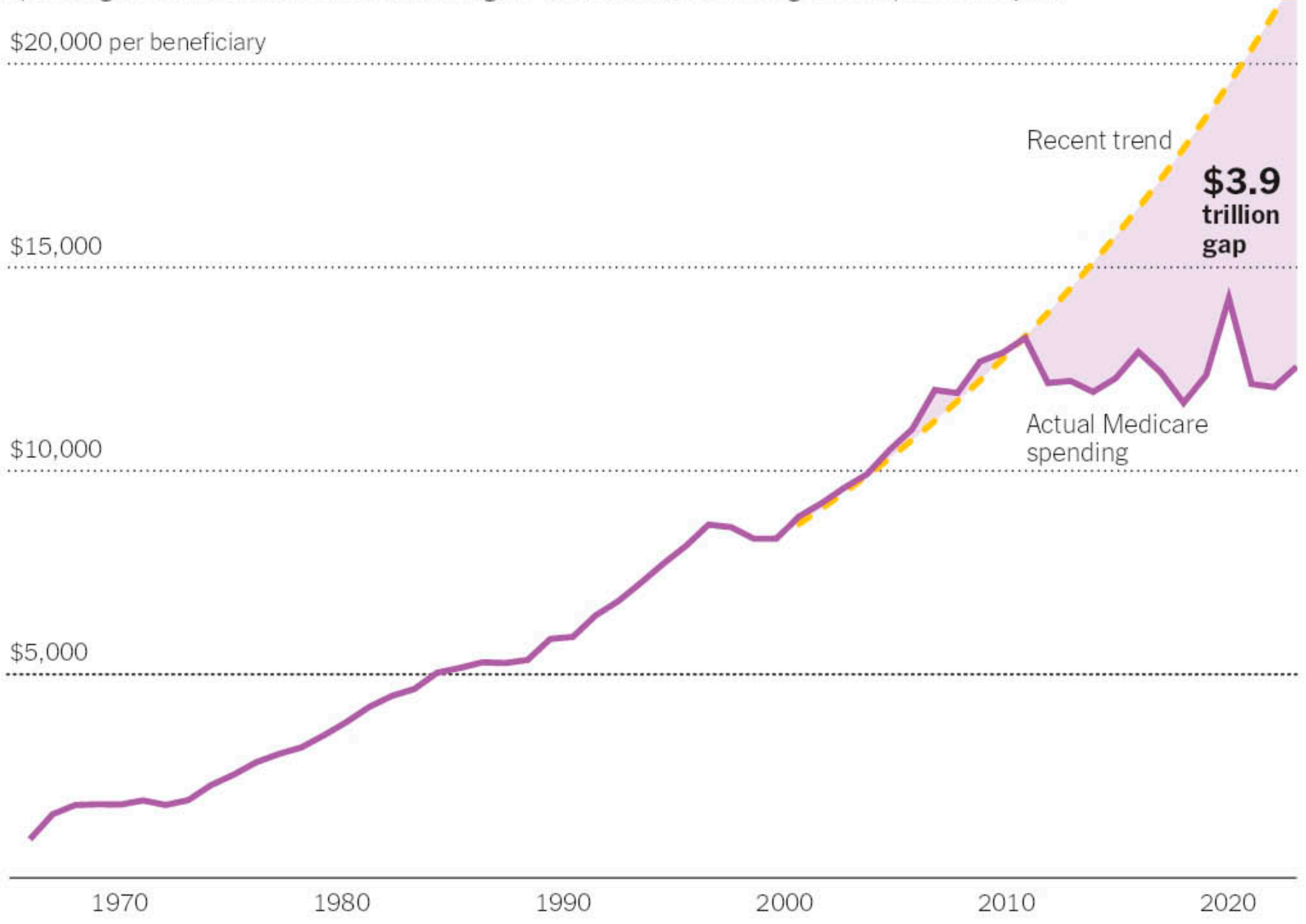
But Medicare's spending is unlikely to disappear as a concern for the budget and policymakers. An aging population means the number of Americans relying on the program is growing rapidly. And analysts continue to worry that the trend is an aberration, and that some new development — an effective Alzheimer's drug, a cultural turn away from cost cutting, the health burden of long Covid or some other chronic condition — will return Medicare spending to form. The Congressional Budget Office, which has lowered its forecasts repeatedly during the period in the face of lower spending, continues to expect growth to tick up again soon.

Medicare is growing more slowly than ever, but still more quickly than the rest of the federal budget. If the slowdown per beneficiary ends, it will strain the Medicare trust fund and drive up the federal debt — and may dominate the Washington policy conversation again. That means the uncertainty about the future has high stakes.

"I used to call this the trillion dollar question," Professor Buntin said. "But now it's more than a trillion dollars."

If Medicare's Spending Trajectory Had Continued

If Medicare spending had continued growing the way it had for much of its history, federal spending would have been $3.9 trillion higher since 2011, according to an Upshot analysis.



Note: Mandatory Medicare outlays adjusted for inflation using the G.D.P. price index.

Sources: New York Times analysis of data from the Congressional Budget Office, the White House Office of Management and Budget, and the Medicare board of trustees.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

$3.9 Trillion Is ...

85%	All federal pandemic relief
1.8x	Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (military spending)
2.4x	All federal student loan aid
3.5x	War in Iraq (military spending)
5x	All military spending in one year
6x	Walmart revenue (fiscal year 2023)
14x	Veterans spending in one year
18x	Salaries of all public school teachers in one year
27x	Food stamps (SNAP) in one year
46x	Homeland security spending in one year
161x	NASA spending in one year

Sources: New York Times analysis of data from the Congressional Budget Office, the White House Office of Management and Budget, and the departments of defense and education.

The Upshot

The Upshot provides news, analysis and graphics about politics, policy and everyday life.

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Shoe Cemeteries, Bikes And Mud-Caked Tents: A Cleanup Tests an Ethos

By FINN-OLAF JONES and JACK HEALY

After days of rain and mud, blocked exits and postponed parties, the last of Burning Man's crowds trudged out of the Nevada desert on Wednesday morning. The "moop" remained.

That is Burning Man argot for rubbish, short for "matter out of place": a galaxy of jetsam scattered across the muddy alkali flats, after torrential rains temporarily stranded tens of thousands of people at the annual revelry of art and music.

Orphaned tents lay caked in dried muck. Toilet paper and carpets were churned into the sodden dirt. They are part of an epic cleanup that lies ahead for Burning Man.

"This is a lot worse than last year," said a volunteer who used the Burning Man moniker Raven, as she surveyed the scene.

The work of tidying up the remote site after Burning Man gets far less attention than the festival's flaming pyres, psychedelic art installations and charter planes packed with tech bros and celebrities. But a meticulous restoration of the Black Rock Desert is required under the federal permits that allow a 70,000-person pop-up city on remote public lands in northwestern Nevada every summer.

It is also part of the ethos of the event: Organizers include detailed cleanup requirements in the instructions they give to attendees, and they track every campsite's performance. No garbage cans are provided, and every camper is supposed to remove all of their own trash.

Even so, volunteer crews spend three weeks after the festival collecting trash and raking the ruts and hillocks out of the dirt to smooth and restore the alkali playa. They draw maps showing the dirtiest spots, and crawl on all fours to pluck sequins and plastic scraps from the barren ground.

In early October, agents from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management will survey random parts of the 4,000-acre site to judge whether the cleanup was sufficient, said John Asselin, a spokesman for the agency.

Mr. Asselin said the festival's restoration teams typically do an "outstanding job," but if the government's inspectors are not satisfied, they will work further with Burning Man to do additional cleanup.

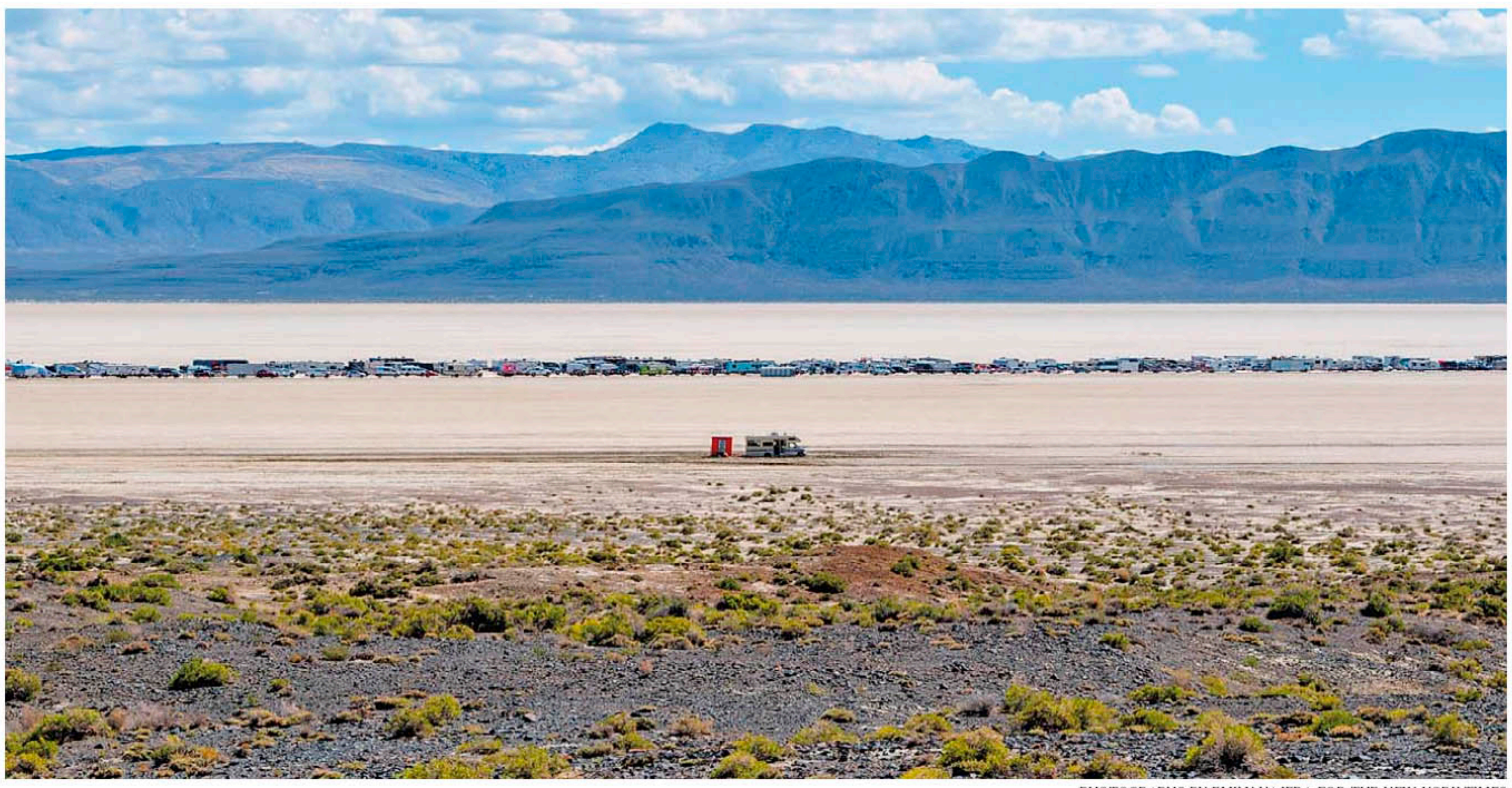
Burning Man and the Bureau have spent years in legal disputes over money. Burning Man filed a lawsuit in 2019 claiming it was being overcharged for the $2.9 million it pays in annual permit fees to cover the government's cost of overseeing the festival. The Bureau of Land Management says it spends $2.7 million a year on the event.

This year, heaps of abandoned, mud-covered trash have turned the early stages of the cleanup into a slog, testing the environmental mettle of a nine-day celebration that prides itself on its "leave no trace" ethic, but that also generates mountains of garbage.

Sheriff Jerry Allen of Pershing County, Nev., said in an email that numerous vehicles had been abandoned and strewn across the playa this year.

"Some participants were unwilling to wait or use the beaten path to attempt to leave the desert," he wrote, "and have had to abandon their vehicles and personal property wherever their vehicle came to rest."

Sheriff Allen also provided details on the death of a Burning Man attendee, identified as Leon Reece, 32. The sheriff said the cause of death had not been determined, and that deputies' efforts to reach the playa on Friday evening were delayed by the wet conditions. After medical teams at the site administered C.P.R., a doctor there pronounced Mr. Reece dead before deputies arrived, the sheriff said.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY NAJERA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Vehicles leaving Burning Man on Tuesday. Numerous abandoned vehicles of people who chose paths less taken have been found.

The work of cleaning up was already underway Tuesday afternoon. A truck rumbled around the emptying festival site to pick up abandoned bicycles for recycling or donation.

A cottage industry of roadside garbage haulers has sprung up along the 120-mile drive back to Reno. On the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, Marc Lowery, a tribal member, set up orange dumpsters and charged $5 apiece for each kitchen-size bag of trash he accepted. He said he could make as much as $25,000 from the festival's garbage.

Campers leave behind "a ridiculous amount" of usable gear, he said, including bicycles, tents, and even barbecues. Much of it can be salvaged or donated, he said. And this year, he added, people are also dumping a furniture showroom's worth of muddy, waterlogged carpets and couches.

Some attendees gave up trying to haul away tents and carpets weighed down by the muck, and simply left them on the playa. Others abandoned entire campsites and drove off, leaving behind black plastic bags bulging with wet trash.

"It was a lot harder to clean things up, and people did leave things behind they shouldn't have," said Norman Brooks, 78, who has been to Burning Man 16 times.

Then — brace yourself — there were the portable toilets. People tracked in so much mud that the doors could no longer close, and the playa was so soggy that maintenance trucks could not drive in to the site to empty them during the festival, attendees said.

"Pretty nasty," said Lauren Bugeja, 39. "There were people leaving bottles of urine there, and all kinds of not nice things. That was kind of disappointing."

Still, thousands of people who stuck it out to party despite the rain said they took pains to preserve and clean the desert plain that they have come to see as a hallowed place. Ms. Bugeja said she went on patrol, picking up handfuls of cigarette butts and zip ties, and saw members of a neighboring camp shoveling out portable toilets. She left late on Monday night to return home to New York after combing through the ground where her 100-person camp had been.

"If there was ever a year to show our love of the playa, it's this one," said Fausto Zapata, 51, of Los Angeles, as he and three other people exhumed partially buried carpets from the mud. "I don't think we're practicing what we're preaching if we don't."

By Tuesday afternoon, volunteers had already made several sweeps of the site, but there was still work to be done to free garbage trapped in the mud.

Adriana Spadiras, 36, of San Diego, said she left her shoes outside her 12-person tent one night, only to realize the next morning that they had been gobbled up by the playa. As she dug them out, she found shoe after shoe, all trod into deep into the mud. Some never emerged.

"It was a shoe cemetery," she said.

Some festival goers left trash and abandoned bicycles on a stretch between Gerlach and Reno, Nev.

'It was a lot harder to clean things up, and people did leave things behind they shouldn't have.'

NORMAN BROOKS, 78, who has attended Burning Man 16 times.

Prosecutor in Georgia Rebukes Congressman Who's Investigating Her

By RICHARD FAUSSET and DANNY HAKIM

The district attorney leading a criminal case against Donald J. Trump and his allies in Georgia accused Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio of trying to obstruct her prosecution of the case in a sharply worded letter she sent on Thursday.

Soon after the district attorney, Fani T. Willis, a Democrat, announced last month that she was bringing a racketeering case against Mr. Trump and 18 other defendants for their efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election in Georgia, Mr. Jordan, a Republican and chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said that he was going to investigate Ms. Willis over whether her prosecution of Mr. Trump was politically motivated.

In her letter, Ms. Willis accused Mr. Jordan of trying "to obstruct a Georgia criminal proceeding and to advance outrageous partisan misrepresentations," and of not understanding how the state's racketeering law works.

"Your attempt to invoke congressional authority to intrude upon and interfere with an active criminal case in Georgia is flagrantly at odds with the Constitution," she added. "The defendants in this case have been charged under state law with committing state crimes. There is absolutely no support for Congress purporting to second guess or somehow supervise an ongoing Georgia criminal investigation and prosecution."

The letter came as the defendants and the prosecution continued sparring in legal filings over where and when the trial would take place. In a new filing, Mark Meadows, a defendant, who served as the White House chief of staff under Mr. Trump, was seeking a stay of the proceedings in state court until a judge ruled on his motion to move his case to federal court.

The Georgia case is one of four criminal indictments that have been brought against Mr. Trump this year; Mr. Jordan's investigation of Ms. Willis is the latest example of House Republicans using their power in Congress to try to derail efforts to prosecute the former president.

When he announced his inquiry last month, Mr. Jordan, a close Trump ally, said it would look for any evidence of communication between Ms. Willis and the Biden administration and examine her office's use of federal grant money.

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Fani T. Willis accused Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio of attempting to "obstruct a Georgia criminal proceeding."

While Mr. Jordan expressed concerns that former federal officials were being unfairly targeted in a state prosecution, some of the issues he raised had little to do with the underlying facts of the investigation. For example, in a letter to Ms. Willis, he said her new campaign website had included a reference to a New York Times article that mentioned the Trump investigation.

Ms. Willis's response is the latest sign that she will not take attacks on her office and the investigation quietly — a striking difference in style from that of Jack Smith, the more reserved and laconic special prosecutor handling the two federal criminal cases against Mr. Trump.

She has a track record as a pugnacious, law-and-order prosecutor, and is pursuing racketeering cases not only against the former president and his allies, but a number of high-profile Atlanta rappers accused of operating a criminal gang.

In a heated email exchange in July over the terms of Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, providing testimony in her investigation, Ms. Willis called the governor's lawyer, Brian McEvoy, "wrong and confused" and "rude," after Mr. McEvoy expressed frustration over mixed signals he said he had received from her office, and asserted that there had been "leaks" associated with her investigation.

"You have taken my kindness as weakness," she wrote, adding: "Despite your disdain this investigation continues and will not be derailed by anyone's antics."

On Thursday, scores of Trump supporters gathered near the State Capitol for a news conference and rally, demanding that the state legislature call a special session to defund Ms. Willis's office. The effort, led by Colton Moore, a freshman state senator, has little support among Mr. Moore's fellow lawmakers and is almost certain to fail.

Mr. Moore, who has drawn attention and praise in recent weeks from news outlets supportive of Mr. Trump, said that Ms. Willis was engaged in "politicization" of the justice system. His constituents, he said, "don't want their tax dollars funding this type of corrupt government power."

In her letter to Mr. Jordan, Ms. Willis invited him to purchase a book about racketeering statutes written by one her fellow prosecutors on the Trump case, John Floyd, titled "RICO State by State."

"As a non-member of the bar," she wrote, "you can purchase a copy for two hundred forty-nine dollars."

HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mayor Eric Adams's comments have increasingly been used by Republicans as a talking point ahead of the presidential election.

Adams Says Migrant Crisis 'Will Destroy' the City

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS

In a sharp escalation over the migrant crisis, Mayor Eric Adams claimed in stark terms that New York City was being destroyed by an influx of 110,000 asylum seekers from the southern border and said that he did not see a way to fix the issue.

"Let me tell you something New Yorkers, never in my life have I had a problem that I did not see an ending to — I don't see an ending to this," the mayor said on Wednesday night in his opening remarks at a town hall-style gathering in Manhattan. "This issue will destroy New York City."

Mr. Adams, a Democrat in his second year in office, has clashed with leading members of his party as New York City has struggled to provide housing and services to the migrants. For months, Mr. Adams has criticized President Biden and Gov. Kathy Hochul for failing to help the city handle the asylum seekers and pleaded for additional funding and expedited work permits.

But the mayor's comments on Wednesday were his most ominous yet. He pointed to new projections that the city's budget gap could grow to nearly $12 billion — the same amount that city officials estimate that the migrants could cost the city over three years.

"Every community in this city is going to be impacted," Mr. Adams said at the meeting. "We have a $12 billion deficit that we're going to have to cut — every service in this city is going to be impacted. All of us."

The surge of migrants crossing the southern border has overwhelmed the city, with nearly 60,000 occupying beds in traditional city shelters and in more than 200 emergency sites. As New York City students returned to school on Thursday, city officials said that about 20,000 migrant children were expected to join them.

The financial and logistical burden has caused the mayor to repeatedly press Mr. Biden for help this summer, saying last week that the city's requests were still mostly "unaddressed" and calling for a federal emergency and a national "decompression strategy at the border."

Mr. Adams repeated the critique on Wednesday.

"We're getting no support on this national crisis," he said.

Republican leaders, some of whom have sent buses of migrants to New York, have increasingly used the mayor's criticism of Mr. Biden as a talking point ahead of the 2024 presidential election. On Tuesday, Kevin McCarthy, the speaker of the House, quoted Mr. Adams in a statement that argued that the "Biden Border Crisis is hurting the country."

"Mayor Adams is right," Mr. McCarthy said. "New York City deserves better."

Pointing to a projected $12 billion budget gap and pleading for help.

Mike Pence, the Republican former vice president, said earlier this week that he wanted to give a "hat tip to the mayor of New York, who's been willing to call out President Joe Biden and his administration for their absolute failure to secure the southern border."

The mayor's remarks on Wednesday provided more ammunition for Republicans, including Representative Nick LaLota of New York who applauded Mr. Adams on X, the website formerly known as Twitter, "for being truthful" about the crisis and urged him to "repeal NYC's sanctuary policies."

But it also raised the ire of immigrant advocacy groups and some Democrats who have called the mayor's rhetoric toward migrants racist, and a dramatic departure for a city where Ellis Island served as a gateway to America for decades.

Murad Awawdeh, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, said that the mayor's comments were dangerous and could lead to violence against immigrants.

"What we've seen with the rhetoric he's using is that it's activating people in a negative way against their new neighbors," he said. "The mayor should know better. The contributions of the immigrant community here have been seismic."

The Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless said that Mr. Adams's comments "villainize people who fled unimaginable situations in their home countries," and that he sounded like "fringe politicians on the far right of the political spectrum."

New York City is required to provide shelter to anyone who needs it — a mandate that has presented an enormous challenge for Mr. Adams, who has tried to weaken it through legal and strategic measures. He has sought to appear welcoming to migrants while also raising alarm about the financial impact of hosting them.

Anne Williams-Isom, the city's deputy mayor for health and human services, said at a news briefing on Wednesday that the right-to-shelter provision was a major reason migrants were choosing to come to the city.

"Before, the right to shelter and what's going on in New York City was like our little secret," she said. "Now the whole globe knows that if you go to New York City, we're going to do what we always do. We have a big heart. We have compassion. We're going to take care of people."

White House officials released a statement that defended their response to New York's crisis, noting the $140 million in new federal funds to the city and state this year, and what they said were constructive conversations with Gov. Hochul on how best to help the state. The statement, however, asserted that "only Congress can reform our broken immigration system and provide additional resources to communities across the country."

One measure of the issue's divisiveness in the city is the increasing number of protests outside shelters and at the mayor's Upper East Side residence at Gracie Mansion. The tenor has turned hostile at times, with protesters holding signs that say "Americans over migrants," chanting "Close the border!" and openly wondering whether the migrants were murderers or rapists.

Migrants who are living in the city said on Thursday that they did not want to be a burden, but that they also did not want to be vilified.

Winder Donald, 53, who is from Nicaragua and has passed through a few different shelters, said he was looking for work and had only found temporary construction jobs.

"I don't know if we are going to be the ones to blame for ruining the city, but the truth is that I think many of us made a mistake coming to New York because we cannot work here," Mr. Donald said. "Without work permits, we can't contribute."

Mr. Donald said that he had decided to leave New York and that he recently bought a plane ticket to Indiana, where friends from Nicaragua said they had found him a factory job.

Crisbany Rojas, 28, who is from Venezuela, arrived in the city three months ago and lives in a shelter in Long Island City in Queens, where she said she has been treated poorly by workers. She said she believed comments like Mr. Adams's contributed to that hostility.

"In a certain way, it is true that we are a burden to the city, but we don't want to be that," Ms. Rojas said. "We don't like to be dependent, but we also don't like to be denigrated."

The setting for the mayor's comments — the Upper West Side, a wealthy neighborhood in Manhattan whose residents largely did not vote for him in the 2021 mayoral primary election — seemed deliberately chosen.

Mr. Adams said the neighborhood was home to some of the most highly educated people in the city and asked what they had done to help solve the migrant crisis.

"As you ask me a question about migrants, tell me what role you played," he said. "How many of you organized to stop what they're doing to us?"

Then he made one last dark warning before opening the floor to questions from the crowd: "The city we knew, we're about to lose."

Raúl Vilchis contributed reporting.

Understaffing in Prisons May Factor Into Escapes

This article is by ***Campbell Robertson, Shaila Dewan*** *and* ***Joel Wolfram.***

Before Danelo Cavalcante crabwalked his way up and out of the Chester County Prison, launching a sprawling manhunt in the wooded suburbs outside Philadelphia, a man named Igor Bolte escaped from the same jail. Twice.

The first time was in July 2019, when Mr. Bolte, who was serving a sentence for aggravated assault, walked out of a work-release center at the jail, "scaled a security fence and fled, on foot," according to an affidavit. He was found early the next morning about a mile and a half from the jail.

This past May, Mr. Bolte, now 30 and held on a probation violation, got out again, climbing up the walls by the exercise yard — he later told a police detective that he "was a rock climber"— and then running across the roof and dropping down by the visitor's entrance. He was caught within minutes.

With Mr. Cavalcante eluding authorities for more than a week now, the jailbreaks at Chester County Prison have come under scrutiny. The key failing in last week's escape was that an officer in the tower, charged with watching over the inmates in the exercise yard, did not appear to notice Mr. Cavalcante, said Howard Holland, the acting warden overseeing the jail, in a news conference on Wednesday.

Unlike in May, when a tower officer saw Mr. Bolte and alerted the jail's staff, Mr. Cavalcante was discovered to be missing only when officers conducted a count in his cellblock nearly an hour later. And the installation of additional razor wire that followed Mr. Bolte's escape in May proved insufficient to contain Mr. Cavalcante.

"The one thing we didn't take into account was a failure on the human element side," Mr. Holland said. "We only focused on the physical infrastructure."

In a country full of jails and prisons, staffing issues are the central challenge facing corrections facilities, experts say, and prison officials have cited them as a primary factor in some escapes.

In an update on the search on Thursday, Lt. Col. George Bivens told reporters that someone had seen Mr. Cavalcante around noon near Longwood Gardens, a 1,000-acre botanical garden not far from the prison where he was seen on a security camera nights earlier. Law enforcement officers have converged on that area, Colonel Bivens said, searching on foot and horseback.

Some of the searchers had worked together before, including on a 10-day manhunt after a jailbreak in northwest Pennsylvania two months ago, he added.

In Pennsylvania, the number of escapes from county jails seems to have ticked up this year. From 2015 to 2022, according to state data, there were 14 reported escapes from county jails in Pennsylvania, and in none of those years were there more than four. In 2023 so far, at least six people have broken out of jail statewide.

This tally includes two men who escaped from a jail in Philadelphia and were not noticed as missing for nearly 19 hours. After their capture, Blanche Carney, the city's prisons commissioner, told the City Council that the incarcerated population and the length of time people are held in jail are increasing, while the number of corrections officers is down.

"We are not fully operational," she said, according to a report from radio station WHYY. "I do not have the full number of posts."

In Pennsylvania specifically, according to a survey conducted last year by the Pennsylvania Prison Society, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, nearly half of county jails had significant numbers of vacant positions in their correctional staff. Chester County Prison had one of the highest vacancy rates among the surveyed jails, with more than a quarter of full-time positions unfilled.

Shortages of correctional staff can make life harder and more dangerous inside for officers and inmates alike, restricting programming and in some cases allowing disputes to spiral into violence — and also potentially increasing the odds of escape.

"It is likely that the staffing shortage that's happening right now across the country is going to have some impact on safety and security, including escapes," said Bryce E. Peterson, a criminologist at CNA, a research group in Arlington, Va., and at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.

There have been six jailbreaks so far this year in Pennsylvania.

Still, Mr. Peterson said it was difficult to quantify escapes, given how little research and standardized data is kept. Overall, escapes are rare, he said; most of them never make the news, and most prisoners who escape are quickly recaptured.

In a study of escapes in 2009, Mr. Peterson and his colleagues found that jails which had reported an escape were relatively larger and employed fewer correctional officers per inmate than did their control facilities that did not report an escape.

At the news conference on Wednesday, Mr. Holland emphasized the role of human error in Mr. Cavalcante's escape. Though there were no vacant posts in the jail at the time, officials were considering plans for "additional personnel," he said. The officer who was in the watchtower at the time of the escape had been placed on administrative leave, Mr. Holland said.

After Mr. Bolte's jailbreak in May, officials brought in consultants to study the incident and make recommendations, some of which were structural. These included installing the additional razor wire.

Engineers came to the prison earlier this week to propose further measures, such as putting fencing over the top of the prison's entire exercise yard, Mr. Holland said, fully enclosing it like "a cage."

No day is complete without The New York Times.

A Parallel Sporting Universe Thrives Near the U.S. Open

From Page A1

speaker as barbecue grills billowed savory smoke from under the many red and blue canopies surrounding the playing courts.

People laughed, children darted around on bicycles and scooters, young parents — including some women in traditional Andean clothing — pushed baby carriages, and players hustled and perspired as spectators cheered. At night, portable lights were hoisted into tree branches, powered by batteries and generators, and money changed hands, the wagering adding some sizzle to the heated competition.

Mostly on weekends in the summer, dozens of courts are lined out by thin ropes anchored into the dirt by metal spikes. The courts are carefully placed alongside the New York Hall of Science, near where many tennis fans park their cars before entering the Open grounds. Some of the tennis enthusiasts glance at the festivities on their walk to the stadiums and see scores of players, many wearing the jerseys of Ecuador's national soccer team or their favorite club teams, pushing large, highly inflated soccer balls over thin nets.

At least twice as many canopies, courts and people — ecuavoley and soccer players, spectators and picnickers — were spread across other areas of the park on Sunday, at least a few thousand in all, a parallel sporting universe to the trendier tennis championships on the other side of the tall fences.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

At Flushing Meadows Corona Park, ecuavoley attracts many members of the local community, who enjoy the games, the sense of camaraderie, and the food.

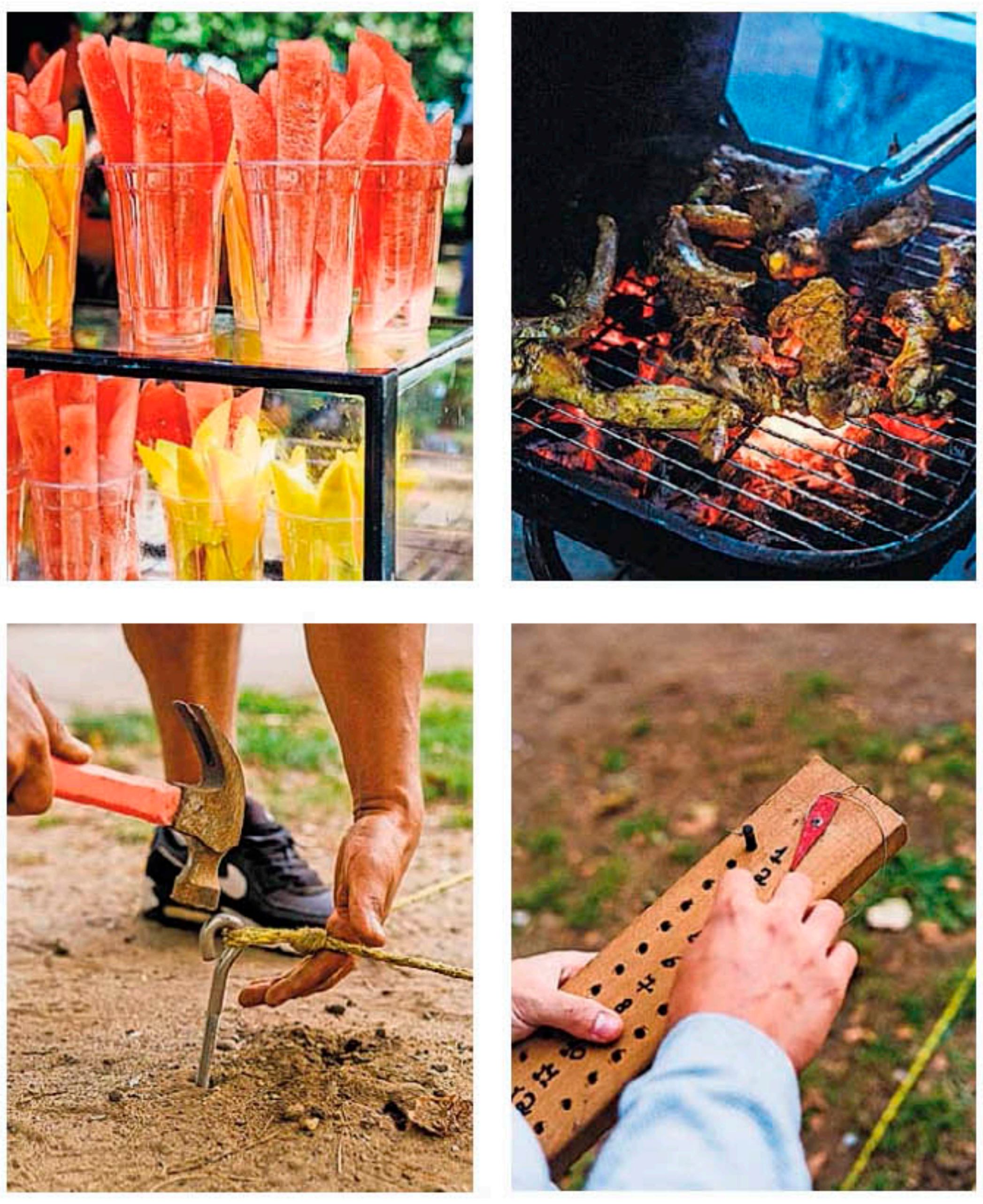
Years ago, the game was played almost entirely by immigrants from Ecuador. But as people with backgrounds from countries like Peru, Mexico and Colombia saw their Ecuadorean neighbors play the game, some joined. On Sunday, a large Mexican flag was draped over one of the tents. But the vast majority of players last weekend were from places like Cuenca and Chimborazo in Ecuador.

"It is very important for our community," said Arnold Saquipulla, a welder who is from near Cuenca and has been playing ecuavoley in the park for 20 years. "People work hard. This is what we love to do to relax. It keeps us connected."

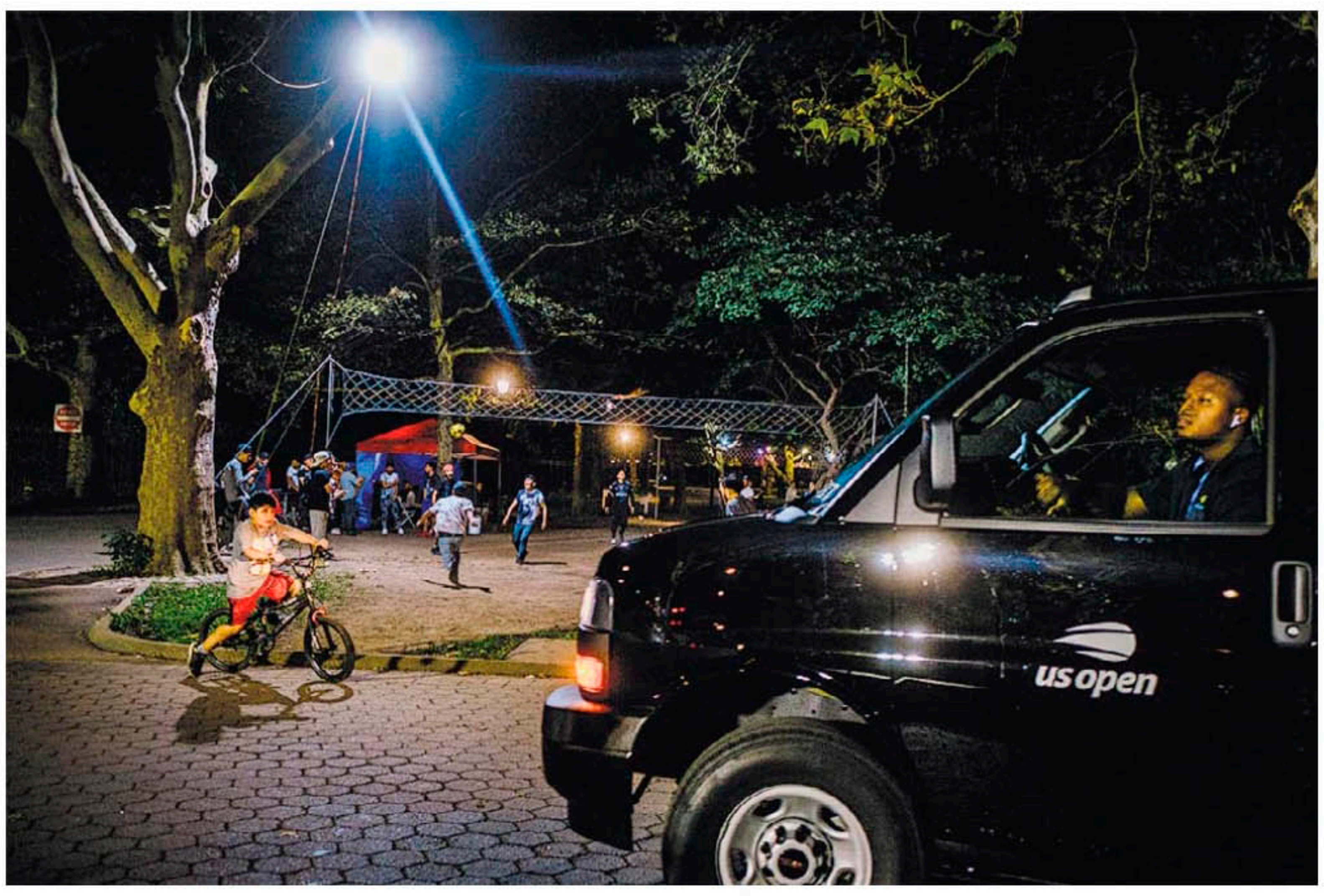
The sport has been especially important for the community after the early weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 ravaged Corona, Elmhurst and other parts of Queens. One in every two people in the neighborhood was diagnosed with Covid-19, according to the city health department, and one in every 160 residents died from it in that area. Many were friends of Teresa Benitez and her family, longtime ecuavoley participants from Corona.

"We lost maybe 200 people we knew from here, people who came here to play volleyball with us," said Benitez, a retail worker. "There was a time I was afraid to look at my phone. I did not want to see another text about someone who was gone. It was terrible."

"Now," she added, spreading her arms to indicate the entire area of play, "we make sure we enjoy all of this."



Clockwise from above, metal spikes keep the court lines in place; watermelon and mango are among the foods on offer; grilled chicken is popular; scores are kept on homemade devices.



At night, ecuavoley courts are lit by portable lights on branches, run by batteries or by generators.

During the U.S. Open each year, some minor restrictions are imposed, Benitez said. Some areas are lost to temporary parking lots, and a heightened police and security presence can sometimes limit movement. Still, the games go on.

"It's only a couple of weeks," Benitez said. "You have to share. It's the fair thing."

Benitez came to New York from Cuenca in 1982 at age 11 with her family, including her younger sister, Blanca. Back then, people played their special brand of volleyball close to the Willets Point-Shea Stadium subway station on the No. 7 line. Gradually it has grown and moved to other locations nearby.

Most of the players are men, but Benitez said her father encouraged her and Blanca to play sports, too, and she passed that on to her children. She loves playing soccer the most, as does her daughter Adriana Tito, a nursing student. Tito won her league championship game in soccer on Sunday morning, then went to the park to play ecuavoley with her mother, father, aunt and family friends. Her knees were scarred and bloodied from both games.

"I hate losing," Tito said with a laugh. "I'll do whatever it takes to win."

With three players per side, each team is allowed to touch the ball only three times before sending it over the net, which is higher and thinner (more like a banner) than an ordinary volleyball net. Players may carry the ball in their hands a bit longer than in traditional volleyball. The large, hard ball takes its toll on arms and wrists.

"When you start playing in the spring, after a long winter with no playing, it can hurt a lot," said Segundo Roque, 42, a construction worker, who is also originally from near Cuenca. "Now I can only play about six games, then it is too much on the arms."

Games are usually divided into sets of 10 or 12 points, and the first team to win two sets takes the match. On rare occasions, teams stop after one or two sets, which is called medio pollo, or half chicken — a dodgy tactic employed to avoid losing a bet. Tenecela, the electrician, was noticeably sour after an opposing team pulled a medio pollo at one set apiece.

"I don't like playing against people like that," he sneered. "It's not the right spirit."

Of course, not everyone shares that passion for ecuavoley. Soccer is fiercely contested across the park, and that is the game that Luis Cueva, 51, prefers.

"For me, the volleyball is boring," said Cueva, a construction worker. "But so many people love it."

Learning to Read Gets Overhaul in New York Schools

By TROY CLOSSON

From Brooklyn to the Bronx, posters encouraging students to "skip the tricky word" or "look at the picture" as they read have been pulled from bulletin boards.

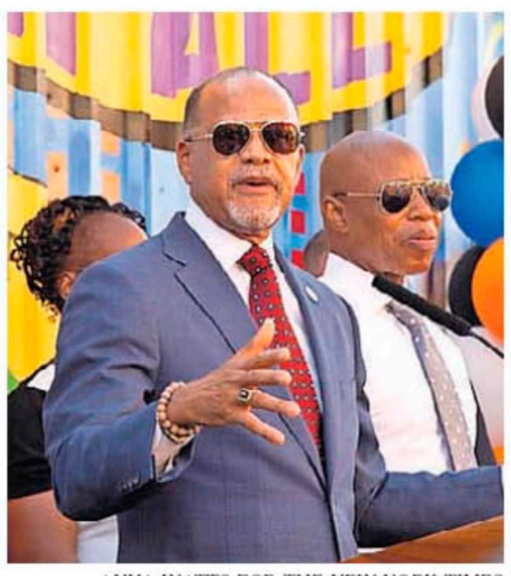
Many elementary school shelves are now stacked with new books that use same-sounding words, emphasizing the repetition of similar letter patterns.

And scores of teachers are about to try out new lesson plans — all part of a massive overhaul of how children in the nation's largest school system learn to read.

As New York City public school students returned to school on Thursday, arguably the most far-reaching policy initiative of Mayor Adams's administration also began in full. The goal is to boost reading skills in a system where about half of third- to eighth-grade students are not proficient on state tests.

On Thursday, the schools chancellor, David C. Banks, called those outcomes "wholly unacceptable," pointing out that Black and Latino children fare even worse, as he spoke outside of P.S. 121 Throop in the Bronx. The school is part of a district that will begin using EL Education, one of three city-sanctioned curriculums that officials have required schools to choose from as part of the new plan.

This fall, about half of the city's 700 elementary schools will adopt or continue one of the approved programs; the rest are preparing to make changes next year. The city's first district school for children with dyslexia will also open after a yearslong push from families, starting with about 70 second- and third-grade students.



ANNA WATTS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The city's schools chancellor, David C. Banks, acknowledged on Thursday that there would be "bumps along the way."

"We have gotten this wrong in New York and all across the nation," Mr. Banks said before the first day of school, acknowledging that "we're absolutely going to have bumps along the way."

As the system transitions, it will also be dealing with tremendous loss: Some 810,000 K-12 students and 90,000 preschool children are now enrolled, down from more than a million a decade ago, after tens of thousands of pupils left New York City in recent years.

Since the spring, many teachers have spent several days in training preparing for their first units, and are expected to receive coaching two or three times a month this year. Among other things, some will be switching from asking students to choose their own stories for independent reading, a common feature of previous lesson plans, to prioritizing group exercises around a single book or excerpt.

Some schools have had a head start, including P.S. 132 Ralph Bunche in Queens, which moved to Into Reading — the curriculum that 13 out of 15 districts will adopt this fall — during the pandemic.

April Rose, a longtime teacher at the school, said the transition had been tough. The breadth of material in the curriculum was initially overwhelming for many on staff, and its writing components felt too disjointed, leading the principal to later bring in another program.

Still, Ms. Rose said, there have also been reasons for optimism.

"The kids are interested in the stories now," Ms. Rose said. "They're not tapping out like they used to, and we're tackling more skills."

New York City schools will face a host of other challenges this year, including a potential school bus driver strike this fall that could disrupt service for more than 80,000 children. Ahead of Thursday, some families had not received their bus routes, and Mr. Banks said officials were working closely with bus companies to minimize problems.

Students are also still recovering from academic and emotional setbacks in the pandemic, and the system has only about one more year before billions in federal pandemic relief dollars end.

And while some 19,000 students in temporary housing — the vast majority of whom are migrant children — have enrolled since last summer, many schools have too few bilingual educators and staff to support them. The city plans to loosen teacher tenure rules to encourage longtime educators to help fill the gaps, Mr. Banks said on Thursday.

It remains unclear how officials will help the system's many older students who are behind in reading, a group that is not addressed in the city's curriculum mandates. When asked on Wednesday, Carolyne Quintana, the deputy chancellor of teaching and learning, did not say whether similar requirements would be made for middle or high schools, but said that struggling pupils in those grades would still have access to support.

Schools outside the chancellor's purview are taking steps to improve reading instruction, too.

Ascend, a network of charter schools in eastern Brooklyn, will start new reading curriculums this fall for about 6,000 students. This summer, all teachers and school leaders were taught about the brain science of how children learn to read, including the skills — like vocabulary and a broad knowledge of the world — that they need to build.

The network had long used a different approach, known as balanced literacy, that focused on fostering a passion for books but that did not always prioritize the decoding of words. Danique Day, the network's chief schools officer, said some children were lagging, and that it was tough to track their progress in core skills.

"We taught kids about the love of reading and how great books were. But the two have to go hand in hand," Ms. Day said.

A Parched City Grips a Lifeline but Can't Use It

Lawsuits, protests and red tape have held up a crucial pipeline in Colorado for decades.

From Page A1

day, almost 40 years later, the water Mr. Ethredge secured for his city remains out of reach.

Plans to build the pipeline have been stymied by bureaucracy, lawsuits and ferocious debates over who is entitled to use the snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains.

Across the country, tensions over water are mounting as climate change, drought and development strain an increasingly scarce natural resource. The aquifers that supply 90 percent of the nation's drinking water are being severely depleted. Housing and other uses like agriculture are draining finite supplies of groundwater. And counties and cities are being forced to hunt for new sources of water, setting up clashes between neighboring communities.

Another proposed pipeline in Colorado that would have brought water from the San Luis Valley to Douglas County ran into fierce resistance from lawmakers in Denver and was abandoned. In Texas, the city of San Antonio built a 150-mile pipeline to bolster its water supply, only to leave residents in the rural area where aquifers were being tapped complaining that their wells were running dry. And in Thornton, there is no end in sight to the pipeline battle.

"It's a classic economic problem," said Jeni Arndt, the mayor of Fort Collins. "How do you distribute a scarce and shrinking resource when there's growing demand?"

After years of legal rancor, most of Thornton's neighbors grudgingly agree that the city has a legal right to the water from up north. But no one can agree on precisely how Thornton should access it, and a fight is raging over the city's plans to move that water down to the Denver suburbs. With the pipeline stalled, Thornton is forced to limit its growth, with all kinds of negative fallout.

City officials recently told a fast-growing company that makes a meat alternative using mushrooms that it had to pause expansion plans for lack of water. A major affordable housing project is on hold for the same reason. In total, the city says 18,000 housing units, which could accommodate about 54,000 people, are not being built because the pipeline is tied up in red tape.

Drilling for groundwater isn't an easy option, either. The city's few wells have produced a consistent but small amount of non-potable water that is used to irrigate parks and other public spaces. But the water level in one monitoring well in Thornton has fallen by about 100 feet since measurements began, and other wells in the Denver Basin aquifer system have had similar drops in the past few decades.

"It's frustrating," said Brett Henry, Thornton's executive director for infrastructure. "We've had the engineering solutions all along, but we've got these political problems getting in the way. It doesn't add up."

Back when Mr. Ethredge secured the water rights up north, Thornton planners figured they would need that water by 2000. But a series of conservation measures and the construction of new reservoirs in the 1990s held off that deadline for more than a decade.

During those years, Thornton also overcame the first legal obstacles around its plan. Fort Collins and other cities and water districts sued Thornton, arguing it couldn't move water that was currently used for agricultural purposes downstream to be used for municipal needs, a process derisively called "buy and dry" by critics. The Colorado Supreme Court ultimately decided in Thornton's favor, appearing to clear the way for the construction of a pipeline.

Then, about a decade ago, it became clear Mr. Ethredge's prediction was coming true. Thornton's population had expanded by nearly 50 percent, from less than 100,000 residents in 2000 to about 150,000 today, and water supplies were getting tight. If the city was going to continue to grow, it would need to tap its reserves up north.

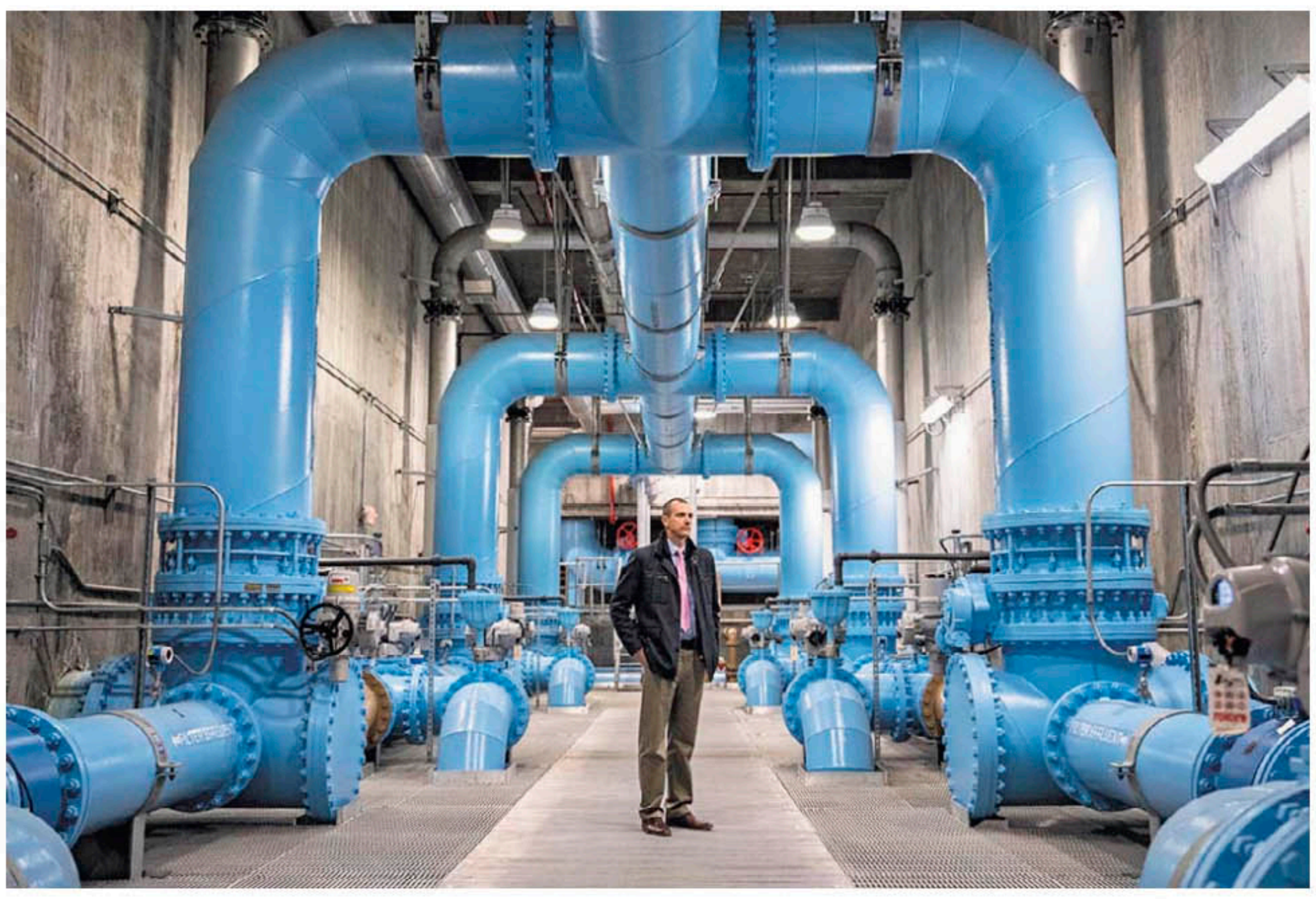
So in 2014, Mr. Ethredge, who was still city manager at the time, began working with the new City Council to develop plans for a pipeline that would carry water directly from the Poudre River to Thornton, bypassing the farms that had relied on that water for decades.

In nearby Weld County, construction began. About seven of the planned 72 miles have now been built, at a cost of about $20 million.

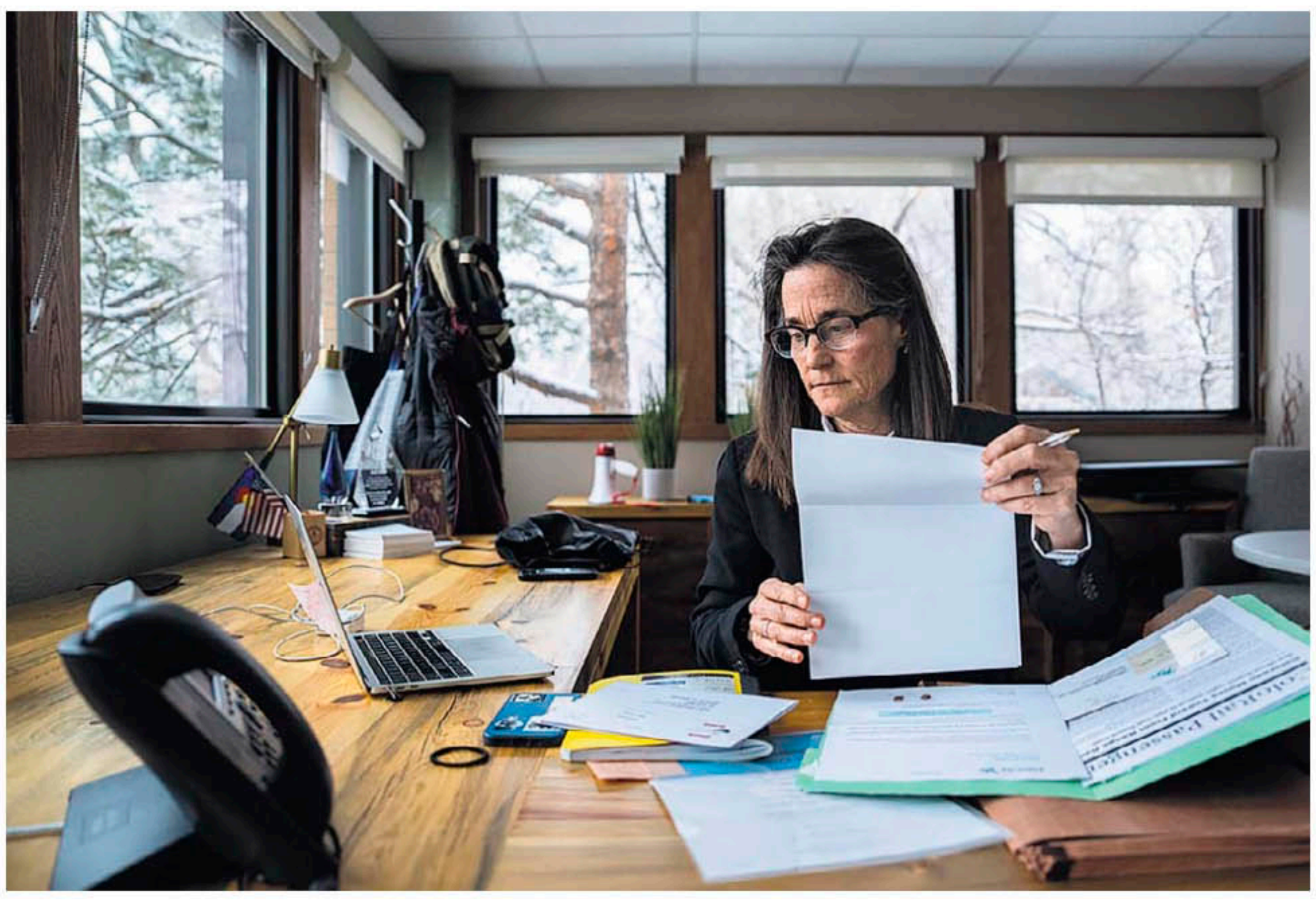
But in Larimer County, home to Fort Collins and some of the land that Thornton owns, the resistance was immediate.

"Of course I don't want it here," said Barry Feldman, who owns a restored ranch house on an expansive property where he keeps horses. "They will have

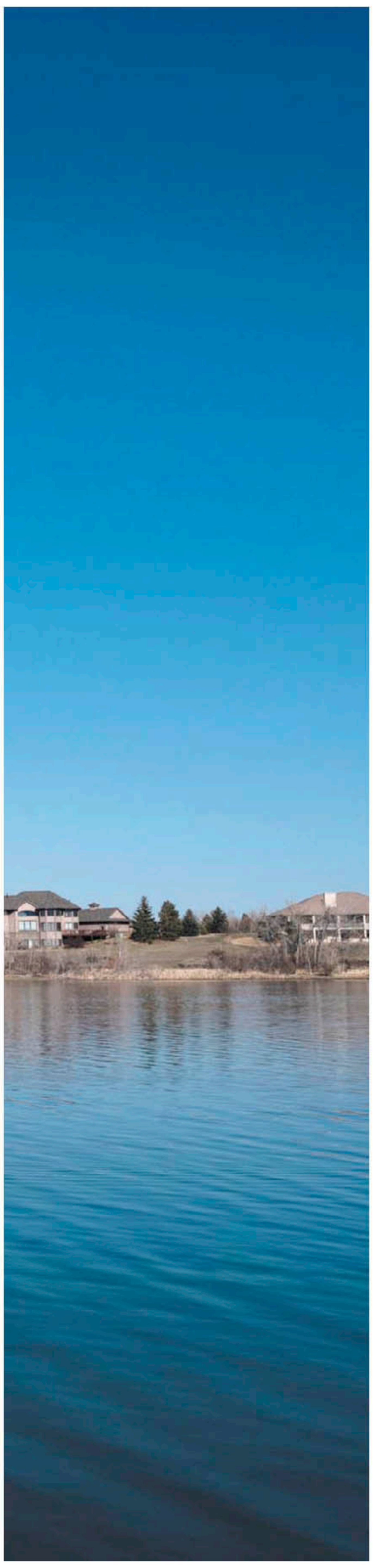
Mira Rojanasakul contributed reporting.



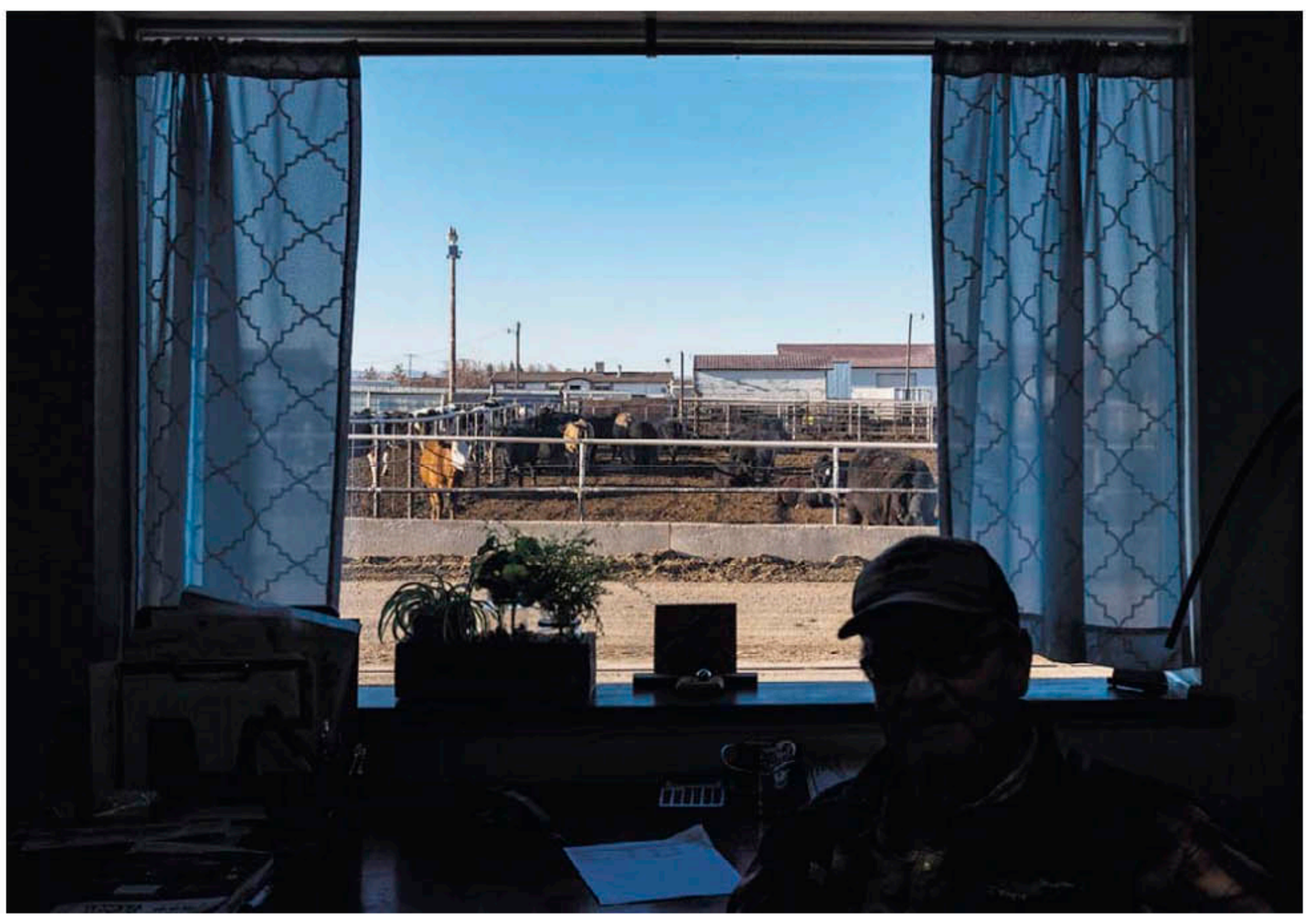
"It's frustrating," said Brett Henry, the executive director for infrastructure of Thornton, Colo.

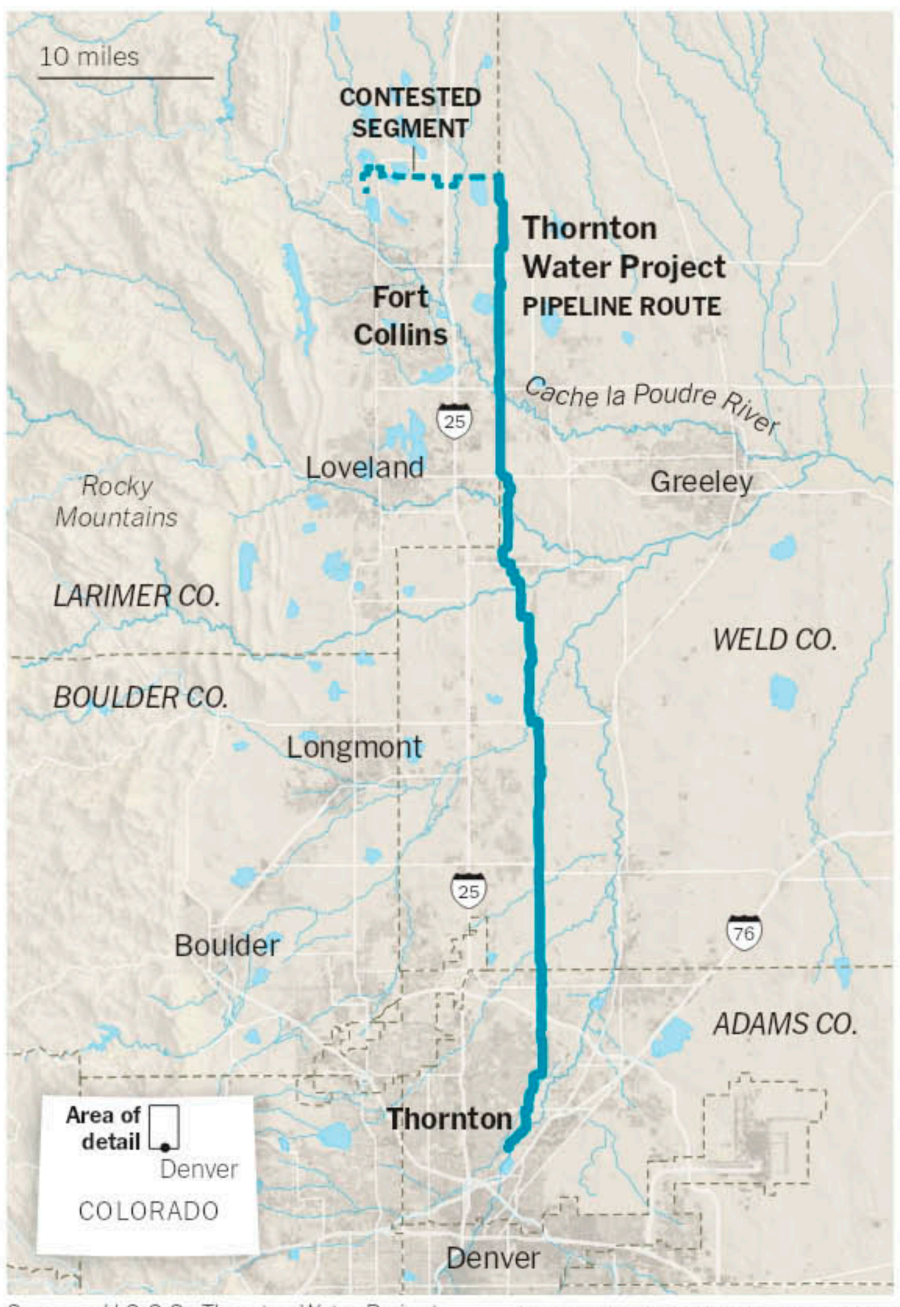


Jeni Arndt, the mayor of Fort Collins, where many residents oppose Thornton's proposed pipeline.



In Colorado cities like Fort Collins, left, and Thornton, above, debates have long raged over who is entitled to use the snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains. Decades ago, Thornton bought 17,000 acres of farmland 60 miles north, near Fort Collins, along with the associated water rights. Roger Uthmann, below, a rancher, said he was at peace with the prospect of Thornton diverting water.





Sources: U.S.G.S.; Thornton Water Project LEANNE ABRAHAM/THE NEW YORK TIMES

to spend time digging, disrupting our lives, and there's the possibility of repairs. Go bother someone else."

Mr. Feldman, an active member of an opposition group called No Pipe Dream, said he believed Thornton had a right to access the water. But he doesn't want the pipeline in his backyard.

Other opponents said they, too, were fine with Thornton accessing the water, but they wanted it to run down the Poudre River, where it could help revitalize an ecosystem long taxed by the region's agriculture, then be put into a pipeline many miles downstream.

"We have one single mission, which is to protect and restore," said Gary Wockner, an environmentalist and the founder of another opposition group, Save the Poudre, as he walked along the river bank in downtown Fort Collins. "We're not trying to stop them from getting their water, we're not trying to stop growth."

But letting pristine snowmelt blend into the Poudre River and flow past urban areas and farmland, where it would mix with wastewater runoff, fertilizers and other contaminants before it would reach Thornton, was not acceptable to Mr. Henry and other city officials. The pipeline, they said, was the only viable option, and Thornton went ahead with plans for construction.

Uncharted Waters

This series examines the causes and consequences of disappearing water.

In 2018, under relentless pressure from the public, Larimer County officials denied Thornton the permits to build the pipeline, saying that the plans for the route were not specific enough.

Thornton sued Larimer County, seeking to override its objections. But a district court and an appeals court ruled in favor of Larimer. Last year, Thornton said it would not appeal to the state Supreme Court.

Instead, Mr. Henry and his team have gone back to the drawing board and are working on a new, more detailed route for the pipeline. They expect to submit new plans in late September.

In the meantime, Thornton businesses are fuming. Late last year, the Home Builders Association of Metro Denver published an open letter calling for a swift resolution that would let Thornton access its water.

"By refusing to allow Thornton to access the water it has owned for nearly 40 years, Larimer County is impacting the livelihood and ability for families and individuals to live closer to where they work and inadvertently exacerbating Colorado's housing attainability crisis," wrote Ted Leighty, the group's chief executive.

Maiker Housing Partners, a real estate developer, has suspended its plans to erect hundreds of units of affordable housing near a newly opened commuter rail station in Thornton.

"Thornton staff has informed Maiker that no new residential projects will be able to start construction until the water issue is fully resolved," Peter LiFari, Maiker's chief executive, said in a statement.

If the pipeline is built and the water from the Poudre starts flowing to Thornton, city officials say the city's population could expand to 242,000 in the decades to come, from about 150,000 now.

Meati, the plant-based food company that Thornton officials said could not expand, declined to say how that was impacting its business strategy. But the company said it was trying to conserve water.

"We take conservation and sustainability seriously, and we have designed a purpose-built production system that minimizes reliance on, and efficiently uses, precious resources including water," Christina Ra, a Meati spokeswoman, said in an email. "We are confident in our ability to scale."

City officials are working to conserve water. During the winter, Thornton uses about 13 million gallons of tap water per day. That spikes to more than 40 million gallons a day during the summer, largely because of people watering their lawns with water that is suitable for drinking, a number Thornton is working to reduce.

"All of the western states need to realize that water is too precious to be throwing away on your lawn," Mr. Henry said.

Thornton officials say that were it not for activists like Mr. Feldman and Mr. Wockner, they would have had their water by now.

Adding to the frustrations in Thornton is the fact that, according to Mr. Henry, the city has been a good steward of its land up north. Thornton has three full-time employees who manage the 17,000 acres, which are currently leased to farmers and ranchers. And while local governments are not required to pay taxes, Thornton has voluntarily paid millions of dollars in local taxes to Larimer County over the years.

Photographs by HAIYUN JIANG
The New York Times

Roger Uthmann, one of the ranchers who currently leases Thornton's land, said he was at peace with the prospect of the city diverting the water to municipal use. "They bought it fair and square," Mr. Uthmann said. "I don't have a problem with that."

Thornton officials said they were confident they would eventually prevail in their quest to run a pipeline from the Poudre down to the outskirts of Denver, although it could take many more years. They have yet to win over residents of Larimer County. As delays drag on, costs go up. The pipeline's price tag is now expected to exceed $500 million.

But even if they finally achieve their goal, with climate change heating the West and aquifers running dry, it may not be enough to slake the thirst of a ballooning population.

"This is never going to be wrapped up," Mr. Ethredge said. "Water is something that, in Colorado, you can't do once and forget. You have to do it all the time."

Jack Ethredge, Thornton's former city manager, correctly predicted a need for more water.

The pipeline would run through the property of Barry Feldman and Barbara Cohen in Fort Collins.

For Mattel, the Success of 'Barbie' Goes Far Beyond the Big Screen

From Page A1

PABLO DELCAN

was the subject of recent interviews with Mr. Kreiz; Robbie Brenner, Mattel's executive producer of films; spokespeople for Margot Robbie and Greta Gerwig, the film's star and its writer-director; and others familiar with the doll's sometimes tortuous path to the big screen.

Mattel and Warner have jealously guarded their financial arrangements. But people with knowledge of their agreement said Mattel earned 5 percent of the box office revenue, as well as a percentage of eventual profits as a producer of the movie and additional payments as owner of the Barbie intellectual property rights. At $2 billion in box office revenue, that amounts to $100 million. In addition, there are sales of merchandise connected to the movie as well as an expected boost in sales of dolls.

Representatives for Mattel and Warner declined to comment on the financial arrangements, though the company's chief financial officer said in a conference on Thursday that the company would make about $125 million in total billings from the film.

Even though Barbie results weren't reflected in Mattel's latest earnings, released July 26, all anyone wanted to talk about at the earnings call was "Barbie." Mr. Kreiz hailed the film as a "milestone moment" in the company's strategy to "capture the value of its I.P." and demonstrate its ability to attract and team up with top creative talent — a cornerstone of its ambitious slate of more toy-themed movies.

After the first "Barbie" trailer — showing a hyper-blond, Day-Glo-clad Ms. Robbie and Ryan Gosling skating along Venice Beach — went viral in December, anticipation started building. Mattel stock has been on a tear. It has gained 33 percent, from $16.24 on Dec. 19 to this week's $21.55. The S&P 500 rose 16 percent over the same period.

Wall Street has been reluctant to give much credit to one hit, on the theory that such success is hard to replicate. ("Barbie" has

$125 million

The total billings the company expects to make from 'Barbie'

had no discernible impact on Warner Bros. Discovery's stock price.)

But for Mattel, the positive impact of "Barbie" goes far beyond just one film. The company's yearslong strategy to become a major film producer, using its vast storehouse of toys as intellectual property, had been met in Hollywood with skepticism, if not outright mockery. A-list talent wasn't lining up to direct a plush purple dinosaur like Barney. But now the perception that Mattel's leadership is willing to trust and support an unorthodox creative team that delivered both a box office bonanza and a possible awards contender has radically altered that.

And Mattel's surprising willingness to make fun of itself was one of the elements that mostly delighted critics and added to the buzz that roped in many more moviegoers than the "Barbie" fan base.

That Mr. Kreiz was willing to laugh at his own caricature came as something as a surprise to some acquaintances and former colleagues. An Israeli military veteran with dual Israeli and British citizenship, a former professional wind surfer, an avid kite surfer and a fitness buff, with more than a passing resemblance to a younger Arnold Schwarzenegger, the 58-year-old Mr. Kreiz comes across as more of a square-jawed G.I. Joe action hero than a Barbie fan with a sense of humor.

Mr. Kreiz's entire career was in media and entertainment, not retail. His longtime mentor, the Power Rangers entrepreneur and billionaire Haim Saban, hired him fresh out of the University of California, Los Angeles, to launch Fox Kids Europe, a joint venture with Fox. He later ran Maker Studios, a YouTube aggregator, which Disney acquired in 2014. Mr. Kreiz left in 2016, and Maker was folded into the Disney Digital Network in 2017.

That "Barbie" even got made was no small feat. It had languished at Sony for years, with Mattel routinely renewing the option, as various writers struggled to adapt the doll for the big screen. Although one of the most popular toys ever, Barbie was the subject of intense controversy, seen both as a symbol of female empowerment and as an impossible standard of beauty and femininity. The only feasible approach seemed a parody. The comedian Amy Schumer was once slated for the part. But scripts came and went.

Weeks after becoming chief executive in 2018, Mr. Kreiz refused to renew the Sony option, according to multiple people interviewed for this article. He called Ms. Robbie's agent and asked for a meeting. Ms. Robbie was among the most sought-after young actresses in Hollywood, fresh from acclaimed performances in diverse roles — as the ill-fated ice skater Tonya Harding in "I, Tonya"; in Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street"; and as a fixture in Warner's DC Comics universe as Harley Quinn, the Joker's former girlfriend. And while no human could replicate Barbie's exaggerated dimensions, Ms. Robbie came reasonably close, while also radiating wholesome beauty.

Ms. Robbie was simultaneously reaching out to Mattel and Mr. Kreiz after learning that the "Barbie" option hadn't been renewed. She was looking for a potential franchise to take to Warner, where her production company, LuckyChap, had a first-look deal. But she wasn't looking to star in the film herself.

Over breakfast at the Polo Lounge at the Beverly Hills Hotel, the plush entertainment and celebrity hangout not far from Mattel's less glamorous El Segundo headquarters, Mr. Kreiz shared his vision: He didn't want to make movies in order just to sell toys. He wanted something fresh, unconventional, bold.

"Our vision for Barbie was someone with a strong voice, a clear message, with cultural resonance that would make a societal impact," he said, recalling his message.

Mr. Kreiz's obvious enthusiasm and determination, and his pitch for creative integrity make him hard to resist, as Ms. Brenner, a producer, discovered when he recruited her to run the newly created Mattel film division during another meal at the Polo Lounge. Ms. Brenner, a respected producer and an Academy Award nominee for "Dallas Buyers Club," was attracted to his idea for the movie. In Mr. Kreiz's vision, Mattel would be as much a movie company as a toy company. The two bonded after he asked her who should play Barbie, and she, too, volunteered Ms. Robbie.

ROZETTE HALVORSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ynon Kreiz, the chief executive of Mattel, and Robbie Brenner, Mattel's executive producer of films, who worked on "Barbie."

At their first meeting, Ms. Robbie suggested Ms. Gerwig for the director. The two were friends and had talked about working together. Mr. Kreiz loved the idea in part because it was so unexpected — Ms. Gerwig had directed and written acclaimed but offbeat independent films like "Frances Ha," "Lady Bird" and a new take on the classic "Little Women," but no big-budget fare.

"Lady Bird" was one of Ms. Brenner's favorite movies. But would Ms. Gerwig consider such a mass-market, commercial proposal?

Ms. Gerwig, it turned out, had played with Barbie dolls and loved them. She even had old photos of herself playing with Barbie. Ms. Brenner met with Ms. Gerwig and her partner, Noah Baumbach, also an acclaimed screenwriter and director, at an editing facility in New York. They kicked around a few ideas, but nothing concrete emerged. Anything seemed possible.

A deal was struck, and Warner signed on as co-producer. Once Ms. Gerwig was on board, Ms. Robbie agreed to star.

At which point Ms. Gerwig and Mr. Baumbach retreated. "I know it's not conventional and not what you're used to, but we have to go into a room for a few months. That's how we work and want to do it," as Ms. Gerwig put it, Mr. Kreiz recalled.

When the script did land in Ms. Brenner's email, it was 147 pages — the length of a Quentin Tarantino film, epic by Hollywood standards. She closed her office door and started reading. "It was like going on this crazy ride," she recalled. It broke rules, including the so-called fourth wall, addressing the audience directly. It poked fun at Mattel.

New to the company, Ms. Brenner didn't know if this would prove too much for Mattel executives. But she believed it was a great script.

Ms. Brenner's first call was to Mr. Kreiz. "I've read a lot of scripts, and this is so different," she told him. "It's special. You don't get this feeling many times in an entire career."

Mr. Kreiz read the script twice, back to back. "It was deep, provoking, unconventional and imaginative," he said. "It was everything I was hoping it would be."

Ms. Brenner was pleasantly surprised. "Ynon is a very confident person," she said. "He can laugh at himself."

At one point Mr. Kreiz flew to London, where "Barbie" sets were being built at Warner's studio outside the city. He and Ms. Gerwig spent a half-hour discussing the perfect shade of pink.

Mr. Kreiz and Ms. Brenner knew they had a potential hit. "It was our secret that we couldn't talk about," Ms. Brenner recalled.

The original budget target of $80 million jumped above $120 million once Ms. Gerwig was signed. But even that wouldn't realize the director's full vision for the film. For Warner executives it was a struggle to find what are known as "comps," similar films that had grossed enough to justify such an outlay.

Would "Barbie" be another "Charlie's Angels" from 2019 — which was budgeted at $55 million but grossed only $73 million and, after marketing costs, lost money? Or another "Wonder Woman" from 2017, budgeted at over $100 million, with a worldwide gross of $822 million?

Eventually the budget hit $141 million and, with some reshoots, ultimately topped $150 million.

On opening night, July 21, Mr. Kreiz took his 19-year-old daughter to the Regal cinema complex at Union Square in Manhattan. As they neared the theater, droves of moviegoers — and not just young girls — were heading to it in pink outfits. Five screenings were in progress. All were sold out.

Mr. Kreiz and his daughter dropped in and out to gauge audience reactions. People laughed, applauded and in a few cases shed tears.

Of course the success of "Barbie" has drastically raised the bar — and expectations — for Mattel's movies in development, starting with "Masters of the Universe," written and directed by the brothers Adam and Aaron Nee. Twelve more films are in various stages of development, including a "Hot Wheels" produced by J.J. Abrams, also at Warner. Some of these may need to be rethought.

And there will no doubt be "Barbie" sequels, perhaps even a James Bond-like franchise, which would be Mr. Kreiz's ultimate fantasy (although he said it was too soon to discuss any such plans).

Mr. Kreiz acknowledged that in a notoriously fickle and unpredictable business, future success is hardly assured. But "Barbie" has given Mattel momentum — the beginning of what he calls "a multiyear franchise management strategy."

Biden Cracks Down on Drilling, Months After Approving a Big Oil Project

By LISA FRIEDMAN

President Biden's decision on Wednesday to block drilling on millions of acres of Alaskan tundra was the latest in a series of aggressive actions recently taken by the administration to curtail fossil fuel extraction on public land and in federal waters.

Over the past several months, the administration has moved to bar drilling on 1.8 million acres of sagebrush steppe in Wyoming and on more than a million acres of public land in Colorado. It insulated more than 336,400 acres of public land around Chaco Culture National Historical Park from new oil and gas leasing and mining claims for the next two decades. And last month, it said it would remove about six million acres of potentially oil-rich areas from an upcoming federal lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico that is required by law.

The Interior Department has also raised the royalties that fossil fuel companies must pay to pull oil, gas and coal from public lands for the first time since 1920, while increasing more than tenfold the cost of the bonds that companies must pay before they start drilling. The Bureau of Land Management also wants to change how it manages the 245 million acres under its control by allowing conservation leases, similar to the way the agency auctions off parcels for drilling and mining.

Administration officials said the conservation efforts were not new and many of the drilling restrictions had been underway for months.

But several people close to the administration said Mr. Biden was personally stung by the outraged response in March from climate voters, particularly young environmentalists, after he approved the enormous Willow oil project in Alaska and that he is eager to win them back.

Energy analysts said they saw the new policies as an attempt to mend fences with young voters and as a sign of willingness to openly confront the oil industry.

"I see President Biden trying to reestablish green credentials ahead of the next election," said Kevin Book, managing director of ClearView Energy Partners, a Washington-based research firm.

Mr. Book said there has been a clear pivot in the administration's posture from the days after Russia invaded Ukraine, when gas prices spiked and Mr. Biden urged oil companies to drill more.

"Now what they're doing is, they are leasing less, and they are offering less when they lease. And they are doing it with higher royalty rates," Mr. Book said. "It's got an awful lot to do with the Willow decision."

It's a strategy that comes with political risks as oil prices rise and Republicans and at least one Democrat, Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, seek to paint Mr. Biden as a radical environmentalist.

The entire Alaska delegation condemned Mr. Biden's decision to prohibit drilling in 13 million acres of pristine wilderness in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and cancel all drilling leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Senator Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, called the decision reckless and illegal.

"Now the Biden administration, at a time when America and our allies need Alaska's resources more than ever, has decided to go their own way by further locking Alaska down while refusing to consult with the Alaska Natives who actually live on the North Slope," Senator Murkowski said in a statement. "It's bad enough to tear up legal contracts and renege on federal commitments. But it's even more unconscionable that the Biden administration is penalizing Alaska right as it allows Iran to produce more of its oil and solicits the same from Venezuela."

Mr. Manchin, who faces a potentially difficult race should he run for re-election next year, said the administration was "caving to the radical left with no regard for clear direction from Congress or American energy security."

As a candidate in 2020, Mr. Biden called climate change an existential threat and said the nation must move away from oil, gas and coal, the burning of which is dangerously heating the planet. He promised "no new drilling, period" on federal property.

But keeping that pledge as president has proved difficult.

The week he took office, Mr. Biden issued a moratorium on new federal oil and gas leases but months later, a Louisiana judge issued an injunction that required the administration to hold lease sales. That legal case was effectively made moot in 2022 when Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act, a sweeping clean energy law that also mandated new oil and gas leasing in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere.

Still, the administration contin-

Perhaps hoping to win back environmentalist voters, a pivot comes with political risks.

ued to reassess where and whether new drilling and mining should be permitted, current and former administration officials said.

"The president said 'we're going to stick to our guns,'" said David Hayes, who served as a special assistant to Mr. Biden for climate policy, referring to drilling restrictions in Alaska and elsewhere. "The president has consistently put new leases under the microscope."

Last year, the Bureau of Land Management analyzed 646 parcels covering 733,000 acres of federal land that the oil industry had sought for leasing. The agency cut that down by 80 percent, offering just 173 parcels on 144,000 acres, according to the administration.

In addition, the Biden administration in November directed the Bureau of Land Management to apply new criteria to future lease sales. Officials were told that any new drilling sites should be located near existing oil and gas infrastructure, should not harm fish and wildlife habitats and should not be near historic or cultural resources or recreation areas.

The results have unfolded in just the past few months.

"The federal oil and gas program is a big ship and it takes time to turn around, but it is being steered in a new direction faster than it has ever been before," said Matt Lee-Ashley, chief of staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Many environmental advocates praised the new approach, particularly the protection of more than half of the 26 million acres in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

But Kristen Monsell, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, said the president's Alaska protections were insufficient at a time of climate crisis. And she assailed the Interior Department for holding a congressionally mandated oil and gas lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico next month, despite the agency limiting the area to reduce the risks to the endangered Rice's whale. Scientists estimate there may be only 51 of those whales remaining in the Gulf.

"Keeping options open for any new oil and gas drilling could lock us into more fossil fuel emissions for decades to come, and we can't afford that," Ms. Monsell said.

Scientists have said that nations must stop approving new oil, gas and coal projects if the world is to limit average global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius over preindustrial levels. That's the threshold beyond which it will be increasingly hard for humans to adapt to extreme weather. The planet has already warmed an average of 1.2 degrees Celsius.

Oil executives said they saw a sustained attack on their industry by the Biden administration that only briefly receded last year in the heat of the Ukraine war and skyrocketing gas prices.

"What we're seeing right now is, on all federal lands and all federal waters, they are doing everything they can to stifle production in the United States," said Mike Sommers, president of the American Petroleum Institute.

Still, domestic oil production has increased by 1.3 million barrels a day since 2022 and is expected to hit records in 2023 and 2024, according to the Energy Information Association. Natural gas production is also expected to continue to grow. Mr. Sommers argued that most of that growth is occurring on private lands.

HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Mitch McConnell wants to avoid a government shutdown and has suggested that impeaching the president is not a great idea.

CONGRESSIONAL MEMO

McConnell's Health Issues Worry Democrats

By CARL HULSE

WASHINGTON — Senator Chuck Schumer was downright effusive when asked about Senator Mitch McConnell's health status after the Kentucky Republican's second frozen moment before television cameras last week.

"I'm very glad to see McConnell back," Mr. Schumer, the New York Democrat and majority leader, told reporters on Wednesday.

It was more than just the standard best wishes for a Senate colleague facing health concerns. Though Mr. McConnell, 81, the longtime Republican leader, has been a leading nemesis of congressional Democrats for decades, they happen to share some common interests at the moment, with a government shutdown looming and clashes ahead on aid to Ukraine, disaster recovery spending and a potential impeachment of President Biden.

So despite their often hostile history with Mr. McConnell, some Democrats privately concede they are anxious about the prospect of his abrupt exit. They are counting on Mr. McConnell's skills as a legislative tactician, his political stature and his general wiliness to help navigate congressional confrontation as they face a season of clashes with House Republicans driven by their party's most far-right element.

"He is the devil they know and a very pragmatic leader," said Senator Kevin Cramer, Republican of North Dakota, about Mr. McConnell and Senate Democrats. "And there is no one more shrewd."

Mr. McConnell is a stalwart backer of maintaining financial assistance to Ukraine despite growing reservations in his own party, and he has the influence and record to keep a majority of his fellow Senate Republicans on board. He has also made it very clear that he wants to avoid a government shutdown and shares the view of Senate Democrats that federal spending has to be higher than what House Republicans are pursuing. And he has suggested that initiating an impeachment of Mr. Biden is not a great idea.

Democrats who often rip Mr. McConnell are refraining from doing so right now.

"There are extremes, mainly in the House, that I worry about, but I think he speaks for the mainstream Republican Party on most issues," said Senator Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, the No. 2 Democrat, who had a lengthy conversation on the floor with Mr. McConnell about his health when the Senate convened Tuesday after a long summer recess. "He can play an important role in his own ranks in helping us come up with a bipartisan solution to our challenges."

Mr. Biden, who has a track record of negotiating with Mr. McConnell, was among the first to reach out to the Republican leader last week after the episode in Kentucky and later offered public assurances about his condition. Officials in the Biden White House see Mr. McConnell as a figure they can depend on to avert a crisis, even though he might hold on to his cards until the last possible second.

It is a sensitive situation for both sides. Mr. McConnell is not particularly keen to be caught working hand in hand with Democrats, further infuriating his far-right critics, who already see him as a charter member of the swamp and what some of them call the "uniparty" mind-set in Washington. And Democrats do not want to be seen as cozying up to Mr. McConnell after their experiences dealing with him in a long string of toxic confrontations, such as when he blocked President Barack Obama from filling a Supreme Court seat for a year, keeping it open until it could be filled by Donald J. Trump.

KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Chuck Schumer said he and Mr. McConnell "disagree vehemently" on some things, but "we're working well together."

They know more disagreements lie ahead.

One Democrat said privately that they are hardly "buddy-buddy" with their usual foe. Still, there is an acknowledgment that on some of the big issues they are facing, he can be more of an ally than an obstacle. Mr. Schumer said on Wednesday that "we're working well together."

"On some things, Leader McConnell and I disagree vehemently," Mr. Schumer said. "On others, we agree and work together to get done."

A Republican leader aligns with opponents on several big issues.

On Wednesday, Mr. McConnell both publicly and privately made a push for $24 billion in new aid for Ukraine while conceding there was "a difference of opinion in my party" on the money sought by the Biden administration. To try to strengthen his case, he noted that much of the money is being spent in the United States on munitions and other supplies, and that Ukraine is doing the fighting so Americans do not have to. Being Mitch McConnell, he did take time to fault the administration for the way it is pursuing its Ukraine policy, but he said he would stick with the president.

"I think he could have done it more skillfully, but he is supporting the effort, and I intend to continue to support it, and I hope the majority of my colleagues will feel the same way," Mr. McConnell said.

Mr. McConnell also took the opportunity on Thursday to bash one of the administration's and congressional Democrats' prized new initiatives — negotiating lower Medicare prescription drug prices — as "prescription drug socialism" in a reminder that he is hardly on board with everything, or even most things, coming out of the White House.

What Mr. McConnell has consistently been on board with, even as a growing segment of his party has come to disdain it in recent years, is the steady functioning of the federal government.

In recent weeks, he has been strongly supportive of the bipartisan work of the Senate Appropriations Committee to fund government agencies at the level agreed to in the deal Mr. Biden reached with Speaker Kevin McCarthy to suspend the debt limit. He has clearly stated that the lower levels sought by House Republicans are not going to fly in the Senate. Even as some among the far right in the House suggest that a government shutdown after funding runs out Sept. 30 would be no big deal, Mr. McConnell has been having none of it.

"Congress needs to address our nation's most pressing needs with timely appropriations, and we need to keep the lights on come Oct. 1," he said earlier this week.

Mr. McConnell sought to settle the scrutiny of his health this week by releasing a letter from the Capitol physician saying he had not suffered a stroke or seizure in his episodes. He vowed Wednesday to remain as leader at least through next year and serve out his Senate term ending in 2026.

Still, a shift in leadership probably would not mean a major immediate change in policy direction. His most likely successors share his general views on Ukraine and other spending matters and probably would not stray far. But they would have nowhere near his experience at navigating the politically treacherous currents ahead.

This is hardly a time, one lawmaker pointed out, for on-the-job training.

Inquiry Into Whether Court Clerk Swayed Murdaugh Jury

By NICHOLAS BOGEL-BURROUGHS

The police in South Carolina said on Thursday that they were investigating whether a court clerk improperly communicated with jurors who later convicted Alex Murdaugh for the murder of his wife and son in one of the most famous criminal trials in the state's history.

The investigation by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division was opened two days after Mr. Murdaugh's lawyers made explosive claims about the clerk, Rebecca Hill, and asked for a new trial for Mr. Murdaugh, the scion of an influential legal family who was sentenced to life in prison in March. Two jurors signed sworn affidavits saying that Ms. Hill had warned jurors not to "be fooled" by Mr. Murdaugh's defense.

Ms. Hill, who later wrote a book on the case from her own point of view, has not responded to the allegations or commented on the defense's motion.

The law enforcement investigation was opened at the request of the South Carolina attorney general, Alan Wilson, whose office prosecuted the case. It is yet another unexpected development in a yearslong legal saga that began when Mr. Murdaugh's wife, Maggie, and younger son, Paul, were shot to death on the family's rural hunting estate in June 2021.

Mr. Murdaugh, who has maintained his innocence, took the stand to tearfully defend himself in the nearly six-week-long trial, which was streamed live and viewed around the country. Jurors deliberated for about three hours before convicting him of murder, and one juror later said that the jury had come to an agreement on the verdict in about 45 minutes.

On the night that Mr. Murdaugh was convicted, Mr. Wilson had addressed reporters outside the Colleton County courthouse and singled out the court clerk as one of the people he wanted to thank.

"I call her Becky-Boo, that's her nickname, but Madame Clerk, wherever you are tonight —" Mr. Wilson began, searching for Ms. Hill. A woman's voice came from above: "General . . . " It was Ms. Hill, standing on the second-floor balcony of the courthouse with her dog, Gizmo, nearby.

The elected court clerk handles mainly administrative matters, such as ordering food for jurors and overseeing logistics for trials, but Mr. Murdaugh's lawyers offered affidavits suggesting that Ms. Hill had personal interactions with several jurors that may have inappropriately influenced the outcome of the case.

The four affidavits described the accounts of four jurors: two who were on the panel that convicted Mr. Murdaugh, one who sat through the trial as an alternate juror and one who was excused just before the jury began its deliberations. Two jurors signed affidavits themselves, while two were signed by a paralegal who described recent conversations between the two other jurors and Mr. Murdaugh's legal team.

Together, the affidavits claimed that Ms. Hill had several secret conversations with the jury forewoman and also made comments about the case with other jurors, who are not even supposed to discuss the case with one another until they start deliberating.

One juror's affidavit said that when deliberations were set to begin, Ms. Hill told jurors, "This shouldn't take long," and that if the group could not reach a verdict before 11 p.m., they would be taken directly to a hotel for the night. "I had questions about Mr. Murdaugh's guilt but voted guilty because I felt pressured by the other jurors," the affidavit said.

The defense motion seeks a hearing over the claims and, if they are supported, a new trial. The lawyers have also asked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conduct an independent investigation, expressing concern that the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division could be biased because it had investigated the murders and was "invested in maintaining" the conviction.

Jurors Convict Navarro For Defying Subpoena

By ZACH MONTAGUE

WASHINGTON — Peter Navarro, a former trade adviser to President Donald J. Trump, was convicted on Thursday of two counts of criminal contempt of Congress for defying a subpoena from the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

The verdict, coming after nearly four hours of deliberation in Federal District Court in Washington, made Mr. Navarro the second top adviser of Mr. Trump's to be found guilty in connection with the committee's inquiry. Stephen K. Bannon, a former strategist for Mr. Trump who was convicted of the same offense last summer, faces four months in prison and remains free on appeal.

Mr. Navarro, 74, stood to the side of his lawyers' table, stroking his chin as the verdict was read aloud. Each count carries a maximum of one year in prison and a fine of up to $100,000. A hearing to determine his sentence was scheduled for January.

Speaking outside the courthouse afterward, Mr. Navarro vowed to appeal his conviction.

"I am willing to go to prison to settle this issue, I'm willing to do that," he said. "But I also know that the likelihood of me going to prison is relatively small because we are right on this issue."

The jury's decision handed a victory to the House committee, which had sought to penalize senior members of the Trump administration who refused to cooperate with one of the chief investigations into the Capitol riot.

The trial also amounted to an unusual test of congressional authority. Since the 1970s, referrals for criminal contempt of Congress have rarely resulted in the Justice Department's bringing charges. Mr. Navarro was indicted last June on two misdemeanor counts of contempt, one for failing to appear for a deposition and another for refusing to provide documents in response to the committee's subpoena.

The rapid pace of the trial reflected, in part, the fact that the case turned on a straightforward question: whether Mr. Navarro had willfully defied lawmakers in flouting a subpoena. Even before the trial began, Judge Amit P. Mehta, who presided over the case, dealt a blow to Mr. Navarro by ruling that he could not use in court what he has publicly cast as his principal defense: that Mr. Trump personally directed him not to cooperate and that he was protected by those claims of executive privilege.

Mr. Navarro, a Harvard-trained economist and a strident critic of China, devised some of the Trump administration's most adversarial trade policies toward the country. Once the pandemic took hold, he helped coordinate the United States's response by securing equipment like face masks and ventilators. But after the 2020 election, he became more focused on plans to keep Mr. Trump in power.

Mr. Navarro was of particular interest to the committee because of his frequent television appearances in which he cast doubt on the election results and peddled specious claims of voter fraud.

He also documented those assertions in a three-part report on purported election irregularities, as well as in a memoir he published after he left the White House. In the book, Mr. Navarro described a strategy he had devised with Mr. Bannon known as the Green Bay Sweep, aimed at overturning the results of the election in key swing states that had been called for Joseph R. Biden Jr.

But when the committee asked Mr. Navarro to testify last February, he repeatedly insisted that Mr. Trump had ordered him not to cooperate. By asserting executive privilege, he argued, the former president had granted him immunity from Congress's demands.

The question of executive privilege prompted more than a year of legal wrangling over whether Mr. Navarro could invoke that at a time when Mr. Trump was no longer president. Judge Mehta ruled last week that Mr. Navarro could not raise executive privilege in his defense, saying that there was no compelling evidence that Mr. Trump had ever told him to ignore the committee.

Asked after his verdict why he had not merely asked Mr. Trump to provide testimony that corroborated his claims, Mr. Navarro said the former president was too preoccupied with his own legal troubles.

"You may have noticed that he's fighting four different indictments in three different jurisdictions thousands of miles away, OK?" he said. "We chose not to go there."

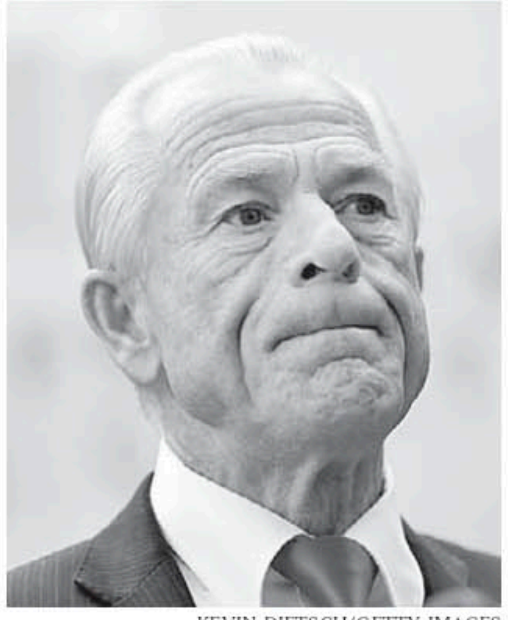
In closing arguments on Thursday, prosecutors and defense lawyers dueled over whether Mr. Navarro's refusal to cooperate with the committee amounted to a willful defiance of Congress, or a simple misunderstanding.

"The defendant, Peter Navarro, made a choice," said Elizabeth Aloi, a prosecutor. "He didn't want to comply and produce documents, and he didn't want to testify, so he didn't."

Detailing the House committee's correspondence with Mr. Navarro, Ms. Aloi said that even after the panel asked Mr. Navarro to explain any opposition he had to giving sworn testimony, he continued to stonewall.

"The defendant chose allegiance to President Trump over compliance with the subpoena," she said. "That is contempt. That is a crime."

Stanley Woodward Jr., a lawyer for Mr. Navarro, countered that the government had not successfully shown that Mr. Navarro's failure to comply was anything other than "inadvertence, accident or mistake." Mr. Woodward presented next to no evidence in Mr. Navarro's defense and instead sought to poke holes in the government's case that Mr. Navarro had deliberately disregarded the committee.



KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY IMAGES

The conviction of Peter Navarro was a victory to the House committee that he refused to testify before.

A second Trump adviser is found guilty in the Jan. 6 inquiry.

"Where was Dr. Navarro on March 2, 2022?" Mr. Woodward asked, referring to the date that Mr. Navarro was instructed to appear before the panel.

"We don't know," he said. "Why didn't the government present evidence to you about where Dr. Navarro was or what he was doing?"

Prosecutors also emphasized the role that Mr. Navarro's falsehoods may have played in drawing scores of rioters to Washington to disrupt Congress's certification of the results.

That caused Mr. Woodward to bristle, telling the jury that the government was relying on emotional descriptions to tarnish Mr. Navarro's image, rather than proving he ever intended to defy lawmakers.

Others in Mr. Trump's inner circle cooperated with the panel in a more limited fashion and avoided criminal charges.

Two of Mr. Trump's advisers, Roger J. Stone Jr. and Michael T. Flynn, appeared before the committee but declined to answer most of its questions by citing their Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination. Mr. Trump's final chief of staff, Mark Meadows, and his deputy, Dan Scavino, each negotiated terms with the committee to provide documents but not testimony.

During the trial, prosecutors emphasized that Mr. Navarro could have taken a similar tack. The panel had informed Mr. Navarro that if he sought to invoke privilege, he should do so in person, as well as list any documents he believed were protected.

"Even if he believed he had an excuse, it does not matter," Ms. Aloi told members of the jury moments before they began deliberations. "He had to comply with the subpoena no matter what, and assert any privileges in the way Congress set forth."

Corrections

BUSINESS

An article on Thursday about the Sotheby's auction of Freddie Mercury's things misstated the duration of the sale. It ran for more than four hours, not for more than four and a half hours.

A DealBook article on Monday about the rise of weight loss and diabetes drugs and its effect on different industries misstated the name of the Apple TV+ documentary about Carlos Ghosn. It is called "Wanted: The Escape of Carlos Ghosn."

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

Contact the Newsroom
To contact the newsroom regarding correction requests, please email corrections@nytimes.com.

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Opinion

The New York Times

Evaluating the Arguments Against Negotiating Drug Prices

Larry Levitt
The executive vice president for health policy at KFF, formerly known as the Kaiser Family Foundation.

PRESIDENT BIDEN recently announced the first 10 drugs that will be subject to price negotiations with Medicare. They include drugs to treat diabetes, heart disease, blood cancer, blood clots and rheumatoid arthritis — diseases that affect millions of Americans.

While government-negotiated prices will not take effect until 2026, the list of specific drugs makes this legislative centerpiece of the Inflation Reduction Act more tangible. Drug price negotiation had been prohibited since Medicare coverage of prescription drugs was first authorized. The law that created the benefit, signed by President George W. Bush in 2003, explicitly prohibited the government from directly negotiating prices — a testament to the historical political power of the pharmaceutical industry. Things have changed.

Although more limited in scope than advocates originally hoped for — among other things, they wanted drug price reductions to apply to everyone, not just those in Medicare, and to apply to far more drugs — the passage of the I.R.A. was a momentous political victory by Democrats over Big Pharma. (No Republicans voted for it.) And it's a victory Mr. Biden and other Democrats are expected to trumpet on the campaign trail.

While the drug companies that make the 10 drugs subject to negotiation are expected to start engaging with the government, the industry is publicly attacking the program and has filed a slew of lawsuits to block the government from carrying it out.

The issues raised by critics can be complex and nuanced, involving trade-offs not always easily condensed into sound bites. Here are some of the arguments you're likely to hear against drug price negotiation and the context necessary to evaluate them.

1. Government-negotiated drug prices will harm innovation and result in fewer lifesaving drugs.

The idea that curbs on drug pricing will stifle innovation has long been the pharmaceutical industry's go-to argument. At some level, the drugmakers might be right: Lower prices mean lower profits, and that will be less attractive to investors. Drug development is a risky business, and the appeal for investors is the big potential payoff fueled by higher prices.

But it's reasonable to ask how many fewer drugs might get developed and which drugs those might be.

The Congressional Budget Office, the economic referee in legislative debates, estimated that the drug-pricing provisions of the I.R.A. would result in 13 fewer drugs coming to market in the United States over the next three decades. That's a very small share of the 1,300 new drugs expected in that period. Some of those forgone drugs might be potentially lifesaving treatments, but some might be drugs that offer only marginal health benefits. It's impossible to know for sure.

Americans like the idea of paying less for medicine. The pharmaceutical industry is not so enthusiastic.

SAM KAPLAN/TRUNK ARCHIVE

One of the big reasons any effects on innovation may be muted is that drugs are shielded from government negotiation for quite a while: until nine years after Food and Drug Administration approval for small-molecule drugs like pills and 13 years for injectable biological products. Drugmakers can continue to set their own prices and reap substantial profits before having to submit to negotiation.

It's also important to remember that scientific breakthroughs resulting in new drugs are not only the result of private industry research and development. Basic science funded by the National Institutes of Health using taxpayer dollars plays a significant role in drug development and will continue to, irrespective of curbs on prices.

2. Government drug price negotiation is tantamount to price controls.

Price controls for health care that exist in other wealthy countries are a big reason those countries spend, on average, less than half per person on care compared with the United States.

However, price controls are controversial and in the current era can be painted as big government. "Negotiation" sounds less harsh.

Unlike what typically happens in other countries, the I.R.A. will not control the prices at which drugs are sold in the United States. There are no limits on what drugmakers can charge private insurers and employers or on the sticker prices uninsured patients pay at pharmacies.

The I.R.A. instead sets in motion a negotiation process between the federal government and pharmaceutical companies to determine only what Medicare will pay for a subset of drugs. The government is acting here as a smart purchaser — like a business, not a regulator.

To be sure, the I.R.A. includes a substantial inducement to bring drugmakers to the negotiating table: a tax of up to 95 percent of a selected drug's U.S. sales if a company does not comply with the negotiating process. Alternatively, a company can choose not to have its drugs covered by Medicare and Medicaid, though few, if any, would give up the business.

So this is a negotiation, but one in which the government is carrying a big stick.

3. Negotiated drug prices help the government, not patients.

The government — that is, taxpayers — will be the primary beneficiary of lower drug prices paid by Medicare, with the Congressional Budget Office projecting $98.5 billion in reduced spending over a decade.

Patients with Medicare will also save. Up to nine million Medicare enrollees spent $3.4 billion out of their own pockets in 2022 on the 10 drugs that will initially be subject to negotiation. For some of these drugs, especially the highest-priced drugs on the list, patients typically pay co-insurance for their prescriptions, meaning they owe a percentage of the price. With lower negotiated prices, those payments will decrease.

The number of Medicare beneficiaries who benefit from the negotiation provision will increase over time, as the number of drugs newly selected for negotiations grows to 15 in 2027 and 2028 and to 20 each year after that.

The I.R.A. also includes other provisions that will help Medicare beneficiaries with their drug costs. Starting this year, co-pays for insulin are capped at $35 per month, and starting next year, catastrophic drug expenses will be capped.

4. Having the government negotiate drug prices is unconstitutional.

The pharmaceutical industry has filed several lawsuits across the country arguing that drug price negotiation is unconstitutional — that the process violates freedom of speech, takes private property without just compensation and imposes excessive fines.

Some legal analysts endorse the claims, while others argue they're specious. It seems likely these cases will end up before the Supreme Court, with an outcome that is hard to predict.

Beyond the specific legal issues at play here, some additional context is important.

In Medicare's role as a purchaser of health care, drugs have been the exception, with no government leverage over prices. For decades, Medicare has set prices for hospital and physician services. President Ronald Reagan imposed constraints on Medicare's hospital rates.

Medicare is a big purchaser of health care, but it is only one of many purchasers. For retail prescription drugs, Medicare accounts for 32 percent of the market, and private insurers make up 40 percent. Drugmakers are not required to sell their products to Medicare, and there are no limits on the prices they can charge to private insurers.

Some are concerned that drug manufacturers will try to charge higher prices to private insurers and employers to make up for lower prices in Medicare. That's possible, though there are reasons to believe that won't happen. If drug companies could charge more in the private sector and boost profits, why wouldn't they already do that? And Medicare will make its negotiated prices public, bringing transparency to a market that is notoriously secretive and potentially setting a benchmark for private payers of health care.

If the Supreme Court ultimately overturns drug price negotiation, it would be a blow to a signature element of Mr. Biden's health care agenda. However, as the cases now wind their way through the lower courts, the pharmaceutical industry may not win in the court of public opinion.

According to KFF polling, 81 percent of the American public favors negotiation of drug prices in Medicare, with support spanning the political spectrum, so it's no surprise that Democrats see this as a winning political issue in the 2024 election.

But they have work to do in educating the public: In advance of last week's announcement, just 25 percent of adults even knew that the government now had the authority to negotiate drug prices.

The more the pharmaceutical industry does to attack drug price negotiation, the more the public will become aware of the most noteworthy health reform initiative since passage of the Affordable Care Act more than a decade ago.

Alabama Cherishes Its History of Defying the Federal Courts

David Firestone
A member of the editorial board who covered the South for The Times.

MOST other states would be ashamed of the tongue lashing issued against the government of Alabama on Tuesday by a trio of federal judges, all of whom were clearly furious that the state ignored their order to create a second majority-Black congressional district.

"We are deeply troubled," the judges wrote, in an opinion laced with palpable anger, that the state drew a voting map that doesn't do what the court previously ordered. "We are disturbed," they wrote, that the Alabama Legislature didn't even try to comply with a requirement that even the U.S. Supreme Court said was necessary. "We are struck," they wrote, by the unprecedented nature of the defiance.

But Alabama's leaders knew exactly what they were doing. They all but asked for the decision, as a way to show that no judge, court or other arm of the federal government could push them around. And far from being ashamed, state officials remained obstinate after the decision was issued. The state attorney general's office issued a statement saying Alabama was right all along, that the court's decision was disappointing and that the state would appeal to the Supreme Court.

In doing so, Alabama illustrated how contempt for the law — not to mention for equal representation and basic fairness — is an animating value in whole swaths of America. There are days when it feels as if defiance is defining large parts of the country, as represented by so many politicians who feel comfortable only when they are resisting someone else's agenda rather than coming up with their own.

The legal problem with Alabama's strategy is that the Supreme Court already ruled on the matter. Just three months ago, in one of the surprises of its term, the court ruled that Alabama had violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — a supreme achievement of the civil rights era — by drawing a voting map that diluted the power of Black voters. A single district in which Black voters were in the majority was not enough, the court said.

BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Representatives of the Department of Justice confronting George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, as he took a stand against integration at the University of Alabama in 1963.

The state's leaders flagrantly ignored an order to create a voting map that fairly represented Black residents.

After that ruling was handed down, the lower court told the state legislature to abide by it and come up with a new map that had two majority-Black districts. But in July the legislature simply refused. Instead, it approved yet another map with only one such district. And its leaders made it clear they were proud of standing up to federal power.

"The Legislature knows our state, our people and our districts better than the federal courts or activist groups," wrote Gov. Kay Ivey, who signed the map into law, "and I am pleased that they answered the call, remained focused and produced new districts ahead of the court deadline." In one stroke, she not only flipped off the Roberts court but also ludicrously lumped it in with voting rights activists.

In a hearing last month, the three judges on the lower-court panel couldn't quite believe it when Alabama came back with a map with only a single majority-Black district. "What I hear you saying is the State of Alabama deliberately disregarded our instruction," said Judge Terry Moorer, at a hearing held by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, one of the three who announced on Tuesday that they would appoint a special master to draw the second district and simply impose it on the state in time for next year's elections.

The judge's description of intentional insolence was on the money. Alabama knew full well that it would lose this case and that a second majority-Black district would inevitably be created over its opposition. That would give Democrats a good chance to win two of the state's seven congressional seats. But Republican lawmakers, who control the statehouse, didn't want to be seen as the creators of the district. They didn't want to appear that they were knuckling under to the power of the federal government. They wanted the court to do it, and they wanted the public to understand that it was the court's doing.

With their actions, they are evoking an image of defiance from 1954, when state leaders openly said they would ignore the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision and continue segregating Black and white children in Alabama's public schools. The state, along with others in the South, spent years resisting the mandate to end separate schools, and in 1963, Gov. George Wallace notoriously promised "segregation forever," bowing to reality only when federal troops made him do so. A series of court rulings eventually integrated the public schools, but many white parents responded by pulling their children out of those schools and enrolling them in private academies.

That tradition clearly lives on in the halls of state in Montgomery. When it comes to accepting the mandates of racial justice, Alabama's leaders will hold out as long as they can and only grudgingly acknowledge reality when it is imposed on them. And no mandates are worse than those from the federal courts, the traditional enemy of the state's regressive inclinations.

"The federal court does what it always does to Alabama: forces us to the right thing," Chris England, a Black state representative from Tuscaloosa, said a few weeks ago. "Courts always have to come in and save us from ourselves." Maybe the state attorney general, Steve Marshall, thinks the Supreme Court will reverse its decision from July, but more likely, he just wants to play out the charade a little longer.

The federal law enforcement system has a particularly bad reputation in the state now that it has twice indicted Donald Trump, who won Alabama with 62 percent of the vote in 2020 and who has persuaded many Republicans that Democrats manipulate federal judges and prosecutors for their own corrupt purposes. After the map ruling was issued on Tuesday, the speaker of the Alabama House, Nathaniel Ledbetter, said the whole thing was part of a Democratic plot to win back the House of Representatives in 2024, led by Barack Obama and his attorney general Eric Holder. (Those two were probably not chosen at random.)

"It's a way for the Democrats to try to take over the House without a vote being cast," Mr. Ledbetter said on a talk radio show hosted by a former editor at Breitbart News.

It's slightly inconvenient for this theory that two of the three judges who signed Tuesday's opinion were appointed by Mr. Trump. But little things like facts and law and justice just get in the way when you're invoking a well-worn conspiracy theory to drive Alabama into the past.

COLUMNIST | PAMELA PAUL

Do 'Elites' Really Know What's Best for Us?

MICHAEL BLANN/GETTY IMAGES

ELITISM IS A frequent target of criticism, especially in politics. Historically, Americans haven't liked elitists. They don't appreciate the hoity-toity who look down on everyone else.

These days that disdain emanates most vocally from the populist right. To these self-described down-to-earth folk without airs or fancy talk, "the elite" is shorthand for those who are more educated and have more power, especially cultural power, code for people they don't agree with and resent.

But the left also has a beef with elitism. To those concerned with social inequity, "the elite" symbolize a flawed meritocracy. In their view, certain demographic groups get elevated over others and bar access to those historically deprived of power, especially political and economic power.

Whatever their respective merits, both critiques are hard not to read as variations on "I want what you have." The word "elite," after all, signifies something people aspire to. We admire elite athletes. We rely on elite research institutions to make medical advances. Most people wish they too could sit in first class. Until then, they hotly resent whoever does.

A more sophisticated and productive critique of elites comes from Fredrik deBoer, known to those who read his popular newsletter as Freddie. DeBoer, a Marxist, activist and the author of the book "The Cult of Smart," is one of the sharpest and funniest writers on the internet. I don't agree with everything he says, but he's always thoughtful and he pushes me to think. I hope his new book, "How Elites Ate the Social Justice Movement," will be read especially by those on the left, because the left is where his heart lies and the failings of the left seem to break his heart most. In this, he and I are fully aligned.

"It's OK to call nonsense nonsense, even if you feel it's on your own side," he writes. "You can defend your values, be a soldier for social justice and be merciless toward conservatives while still admitting when feckless people take liberal ideology to bizarre ends." As deBoer points out, it's far better for those of us on the left to clean up our own mess than to hand it over to conservatives as easy fodder for mockery. To that end, he scrutinizes the self-interests of the nonprofit industry, the "elite capture" of the Black Lives Matter movement, the neglect of class as a primary category of political thought and other failures and shortcomings among progressive movers.

What drives deBoer's argument here is the idea that on the left, elites are undermining progress for the average Joe. Worse, they're doing it in the name of progress. It's time, he says, to forcefully question exactly what elites on the left claim is best for everyone else, especially when evidence suggests otherwise.

One of the bravest chapters in his new book examines the elitism of the defund the police movement, which, deBoer argues, hurts the cause of racial justice. Research shows more policing has reduced homicides, which disproportionately affect Black Americans. Black Americans are about 13 percent of the population but make up more than half of homicide victims. As deBoer explains, "police abolition and incremental efforts to reduce policing could easily result in more hardship for the very community that we're ostensibly fighting for."

Freddie deBoer's new book aims to save the left from itself.

In deBoer's view, this misplaced enthusiasm for police abolition is largely a result of the economic and cultural gulf between elite activists of all races and a vast majority of Black Americans. What's easy for radical activists and academics to write on a placard turns out to be hard for many Black Americans to actually live with. Taking the police off the streets may minimize the possibility of police violence against Black people, but it will do little to mitigate the far greater problem of all other violence against Black people.

Many Black people, particularly outside of elite circles, are all too aware of this. As deBoer notes, "significant majorities of Black Americans want not less policing but better policing." In 2022, Black Democrats were twice as likely as white Democrats to say reducing crime should be a top priority. A 2021 survey found that white liberals were more inclined than Black Americans to support defunding the police: "71 percent of white liberals say they would support reducing police budgets and shifting funding to social services," compared with 53 percent of Black Americans; a significant 44 percent of Black people oppose it altogether.

Yet for many on the left, to point out these facts is considered sacrilege, somehow racist and essentially tantamount to serving the enemy. Many white progressives are so terrified of being labeled "racist" themselves that they prioritize self-protection and fear of their critics over helping out the very people they profess to want to help — people they may not understand well at all.

For deBoer, police violence and other problems of social justice require action from people of all races and ethnicities, rather than heeding the empty diktats of elite discourse. "I feel strongly that there must be a way — there must be a way — to take police violence against Black people immensely seriously and to fight for major police reform," he writes, "while acknowledging that crimes and violence committed against Black people by those other than police are far more common."

Last month I met deBoer for lunch near where he lives in Connecticut. He talked a lot about the class disparities of the state, which contains many of the wealthiest pockets in the nation alongside extreme poverty. He sees himself writing in the tradition of leftist thinkers like Eric Hobsbawm, Todd Gitlin, Richard Rorty and Adolph Reed. It seems to pain him that the left so often shoots itself in the foot.

When I asked why he wrote this book, he said, "I really do believe that we live in a country and a culture with deeply entrenched racial inequality, and all decent people have a duty to try to confront that inequality." However, he emphasized, it's not only something we have a moral duty to do — we also have a moral duty to do it *well*. The number of people who genuinely thought there was a chance of police abolition was very small, he told me. "But by making that a centerpiece of their demands, it allowed them to say afterward, 'Look at how awful things are now. We didn't go far enough.'" It's a way for the left, deBoer explained, to look like "a beautiful failure."

DeBoer doesn't consider himself an optimist, but he nonetheless doesn't want to concede that kind of defeat. The left, he told me, needs to return to the "up from below" approach of the socialist politician Eugene Debs: It needs to invest in real change for those in need rather than heed elite rhetoric. To my ears, all this does sound quite optimistic, considering the polarized discourse and politics of 2023, where shouty or performative extremism often gets in the way of duller and more difficult action. But as deBoer says, a bottom-up approach may be the best, or only, option for meaningful social progress.

COLUMNIST | DAVID BROOKS

The American Renaissance Is Already at Hand

TWO MEGATRENDS HAVE shaped American life since the 1980s: the rise of China and the hollowing out of American industry.

China's economic boom prompted a thousand predictions — that it will soon surpass us as an economic power, that the 21st century is going to be a Chinese century, that America is an aging, decadent nation destined for second place.

The hollowing out of American industry fed the sense that capitalism is betraying the middle class. America has a parasitic financial sector, but we don't make things anymore. Manufacturing jobs got outsourced to China and Mexico, and wages stagnated.

These two trends contributed to the sense that America is in decline — to the angry, gloomy pall that has settled over political life.

But it's beginning to look as if those two megatrends are reversing. China does not look like a growing dynamic power, but a troubled, stagnating one. Growth rates are falling. The unemployment rate for those ages 16 to 24 in urban areas is at a demoralizing 21 percent. Private investment is sluggish. A forecast from Bloomberg Economics now projects that the size of the Chinese economy will not successfully surpass the size of the American economy — despite its vastly larger population.

The causes of China's stagnation are myriad and deep: an overinvestment in real estate, the decline in foreign investment as the state become more menacing, the decline of exports, the demographic doom spiral. Since 2016, the number of births in China has fallen by nearly 50 percent.

But the core problems are endemic to the regime: Centralized authoritarian control is incompatible with a wide-open, innovative, free-flowing modern economy. Industrial policy may look good for a short time, but it ossifies. China now has a plethora of zombie corporations, which suck up subsidies without successfully competing in the marketplace. Open information flow is crucial to any nation; when the state suppresses information unflattering to the regime, then everything is bound to sink into mediocrity.

As the Chinese economy deflates, American industry is looking less hollow. America has a net gain of 530,000 manufacturing jobs since January 2017. The manufacturing boom has been torrid of late. Since late 2021, investment in the construction of manufacturing facilities has more than doubled.

Much of that boom is happening in the Mountain West, the Upper Midwest and parts of the Southeast. Chips, electric vehicles, renewable energy sources and batteries are being manufactured in places like Michigan, Kentucky, Minnesota and Arizona.

Over the past few years, for example, scads of tech firms have decided to invest in manufacturing plants in formerly rust belt Ohio: Intel ($20 billion), Amazon ($7.8 billion), Google ($3.7 billion). According to a Hoover Institution study, Ohio in 2020 attracted almost 14 times more new capital projects per capita than California.

In short, capital, construction and manufacturing are flowing back into many places that have taken their hits. Since 2011, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, wage growth has "accelerated more for high school graduates than for college graduates."

What lessons are we to draw from these two ongoing turnarounds? The first is that there's a lot of resilience and dynamism in America's brand of broadly free market capitalism. As I've noted before, in 1990 the European and American gross domestic products per capita were nearly neck and neck. Since then, America has surged ahead. American labor productivity increased by 67 percent between 1990 and 2022, compared with 55 percent in Europe and 51 percent in Japan.

In 2012 I heard a commencement speech by Dr. Atul Gawande that introduced me to the phrase "failure to rescue." He reported on a study that found the best hospitals don't necessarily prevent bad things from happening, but they're really good at rescuing people when they have a complication to prevent failures from becoming catastrophes.

The American economy, especially in the Midwest, is kind of like that. Many of those places have experienced economic decline, but governments and people have shifted and adapted, and they are bouncing back.

The second lesson I draw is that Bidenomics is working — big time. President Biden promised to help America outcompete authoritarian China and to heal some of the economic divides at home. Both those goals are being achieved.

According to the Treasury Department, over 80 percent of the investment made through the Inflation Reduction Act is going to counties with college graduation rates lower than the national average. Nearly 90 percent of investments are being made in counties with below-average weekly wages.

China's growth is declining while Biden's economic plan is working.

I know many of you think Biden is too old, but I'd vote for a 100-year-old who could keep delivering results like that.

The third lesson I draw is that the right-wing populists are hopelessly outdated. Take, for example, the writer Sohrab Ahmari, who argues that "the state must also take a far more active role in coordinating economic activity for the good of the whole community." But China's industrial policy illustrates the classic downsides of excessive state interference. Even the vaunted German model, one of the great success stories of the 20th century, is showing its age. German manufacturing output and gross domestic product have been stagnant since 2018.

American politics is dysfunctional, our social fabric is in tatters, but somehow our economy is among the strongest in the world. Our economic competitors stumble and fall; we stumble, and somehow bounce back.

CORRECTION

A graphic accompanying an April 30 article about pedestrian and cyclist deaths misstated the traffic death rates in some foreign countries. The data is for deaths per 100 million miles traveled, not per 100 million kilometers traveled.

LETTERS

A Performance Review for President Biden

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Why So Many Americans Are So Down on Biden," by Bret Stephens (column, Sept. 6):

Sure, the president is old, but, boy, has the country improved.

Morality and tolerance for others has returned at the highest levels of government. Respect for America in the world has returned. Foundations for the country's future have been established (Inflation Reduction Act, Chips Act, etc.). And the basic economic approach has flipped from ineffective Reaganomics to very effective Bidenomics.

C'mon, forget an occasional stumble, or less than polished speech — it's action and leadership that should be noted, and applauded.

TIM NEALE, AMHERST, MASS.

TO THE EDITOR:

All things considered, I believe that Joe Biden has done a fantastic job as president. Except in his most important role: He is not an inspiring communicator. And that is the No. 1 requirement of good leadership.

He is a manager. Not a leader. And because we project our national identity onto our president, he does not sate our desire for a robust, optimistic leader.

He has served us well. But he needs to pass the torch to the next generation. My own choice: Pete Buttigieg.

CAROL WEISS
BRADENTON, FLA.

TO THE EDITOR:

Bret Stephens makes a few reasonable points about President Biden's popularity issues. But he fails to mention the most obvious reason for his low poll numbers: the relentless, steady drip of innuendo and lying and manipulation by Fox News and the many right-wing radio shows.

The dismantling of the Fairness Doctrine and the rise of all these shows have changed the political landscape . . . and not for the better.

WALTER KENNEDY
SAN FRANCISCO

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Biden Struggles to Sway Voters on the Economy" (news article, Sept. 3):

President Biden is our most effective president since Lyndon Johnson. He has passed major legislation to save us from the ravages of Covid, to build the country's infrastructure and chips technology, to attack climate change and to allow negotiations to reduce the cost of prescription drugs.

Under Mr. Biden's strong leadership, the economy is functioning extremely well. Unemployment is at or near record lows in many states, and wage growth has been impressive. In the last year, inflation has shrunk dramatically.

Still, the public is not convinced of Mr. Biden's economic stewardship. We face highly divisive and uncertain times, and Americans desperately seek reassurance that their lives will be improved. Under these conditions, the phrase Bidenomics does not resonate.

A slogan like "Investing in You" would be highly effective. It creates a sense of hope. Investments take time to pay off, which acknowledges that the economy is still not perfect. It is a personal message that expresses the president's concern for the welfare of every American.

"Investing in You" means opportunity and a brighter future for every American.

KEN HARGIS, LOS ALTOS, CALIF.

A Groundwater Crisis

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "America Is Using Up Its Groundwater Like There's No Tomorrow" ("Uncharted Waters" series, Sept. 2):

Back in the 1960s, geologists studying the Ogallala Aquifer — the United States' largest aquifer, which lies under parts of eight states in the Great Plains — warned that, while the aquifer had taken millions of years to form, mono-cropping and other industrial farming practices threatened its existence.

Few people listened, and water mining increased.

Wells have dried up, and deeper wells have been drilled to find new sources of water. Corn is one of the thirstiest crops grown, and most corn is used for ethanol and animal feed at factory farms, which themselves use a tremendous amount of water.

It's way past time to outlaw these agricultural practices, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to fund them.

REGINA RAE WEISS, BROOKLYN

Training Horses

TO THE EDITOR:

"A Sport Facing Crisis and Decline Tries to Reform Before It's Too Late" (Sports, Sept. 3) included many ways to improve the sport's dismal rate of breakdowns and deaths without ever mentioning the most obvious and effective solution of all: raising the age at which horses are allowed to race.

Hopefully this would delay the training process, allowing a horse's muscles, tendons and ligaments time to fully develop and malleable young bones to "set." A horse doesn't complete its final set of teeth until its fifth year.

The modern racing world could learn a lot from old-time cowboys, the best of whom didn't start breaking a horse until it was four or five years old.

RICK DONAHOE
YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO

The writer, a retired farrier, is the author of "Me 'n' Clint," a horseshoeing memoir.

Drug Price Negotiations

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "U.S. Names Drugs Selected to Face Price Bargaining" (front page, Aug. 30):

It's nothing short of shameful that six large pharmaceutical companies are suing the Biden administration to block the new prescription drug price negotiation program.

The industry continues to be among the most profitable year after year and deserves credit for delivering some spectacular products, including the coronavirus vaccines. But it's past time that the prices of some prescription medicines become subject to stricter government oversight, especially since Medicare and Medicaid are responsible for about 45 percent of nationwide spending on prescription drugs each year.

The Biden administration's program is a measured experiment, initially encompassing a small number of drugs that meet certain criteria (such as lack of competition).

Industry claims that the program will undercut drug research and development are completely bogus, according to numerous expert analyses. It's also inaccurate to say the program imposes "price controls" on the industry. The new program's impact will be carefully assessed over the next five years.

Americans have long paid the highest prescription drug prices in the world, and the U.S. has been, until now, one of the only developed nations that didn't have a program in place to make sure medicines are affordable. The industry's effort to kill this program is an egregious example of putting profits above the needs of society.

STEVEN FINDLAY
BARNESVILLE, MD.

The writer is a retired health policy researcher.

Don't Call It Cancer

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Not Everything We Call Cancer Should Be Called Cancer," by Laura Esserman and Scott Eggener (Opinion guest essay, Sept. 1):

When I was treated for ductal carcinoma in situ 15 years ago — with surgery, radiation and, eventually, a mastectomy — I wondered why such aggressive measures were necessary for something that at least one of the physicians I consulted assured me "wasn't cancer." But with no other way to talk about it, the only option was to treat D.C.I.S. (which has "carcinoma" in the name, after all) as if it were, or would surely become, an invasive disease.

I wish Drs. Esserman and Eggener luck in their efforts to rebrand D.C.I.S., and in so doing open up new treatment options, like active surveillance, that didn't exist when I needed them.

LAURA GOLDSTEIN, NEW YORK

The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Those selected may be edited, and shortened to fit allotted space. Email: letters@nytimes.com

3 LEGAL
Philips Respironics, a maker of CPAP machines, reaches a $479 million settlement over defective breathing devices.

3 LABOR
Warner Bros. suspends deals with top television creators, like Mindy Kaling, left, as the writers' strike continues.

6 SPORTS
Ben Shelton, a rising American star, has answered the call at the U.S. Open with a signature gesture.

A Fresh Fleet of Ships To Move a Glut of Cars

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Workers filing out of the gates at the Jinling Shipyard in Yizheng, China, where two carrier ships, each capable of carrying 5,000 or more cars, are being built.

With other exports faltering and the demand at home for its gasoline-powered vehicles flat, China creates floating parking lots to satisfy a global market.

By KEITH BRADSHER

YIZHENG, CHINA — At a time when many of China's exports are faltering and its consumers are spending less at home, the country is flooding the world with cars.

Overseas demand for inexpensive vehicles made in China, mostly gasoline-powered models that Chinese consumers now shun in favor of electric cars, is so great that the biggest obstacle to selling more abroad is a lack of specialized ships to carry them.

Chinese automakers have leaped to dominance in Russia since war began in Ukraine, transporting cars by train. The companies have also captured large shares of markets in Southeast Asia, Australia, South America and Mexico. With lingering Trump-era tariffs holding back sales to the United States, China's automakers are preparing a big push into Europe — once they have enough ships.

Shipyards along the Yangtze River are building a fleet of car-carrying ships that act as giant floating parking lots, capable of carrying 5,000 or more cars at a time.

The Jinling shipyard in Yizheng, a town near Nanjing, "is busy around the clock, there are night shifts every day," said Feng Wanyou, a ship welder, during a lunch break.

Overall exports of Chinese goods, everything from furniture to consumer electronics, slumped 5.5 percent in the first eight months of this year, according to data released on Thursday. But China's car industry has quadrupled exports in just three years, surpassing Japan this year as the world leader. This year, exports of cars surged 86 percent through July.

Chinese households' appetite for spending — on new cars and almost everything else — has waned as real estate prices have fallen.

CONTINUED ON PAGE B4

Kering's Chief Strikes Deal For the Talent Agency CAA

By LAUREN HIRSCH and VANESSA FRIEDMAN

In a deal that shows the ever-growing convergence of fashion and fame, François-Henri Pinault, the French billionaire and chief executive of the luxury goods company Kering, said on Thursday that his family office had bought a majority stake in one of Hollywood's biggest talent agencies, Creative Artists Agency.

Setting a high bar for other moguls in the field of luxury goods.

Mr. Pinault's family office, Artémis, already has investments that include the auction house Christie's and a stake in Puma. Like them, CAA will be managed separately from Kering, which owns such brands as Gucci, Saint Laurent and Balenciaga.

Talent — actors, singers, filmmakers — has become a uniquely powerful tool in selling products. Celebrities, be they actors, athletes or social media stars, give a brand direct access to legions of followers and are handsomely paid for that access. Fashion brands are increasingly racing to lock in relationships with the next big name.

"There's no separation between fashion and entertainment anymore," said Robert Burke, the eponymous founder of a luxury consultancy, calling the deal a "natural, if unprecedented, evolution."

CAA's clients include some of the biggest celebrities: Tom Hanks, Steven Spielberg and Zendaya — as well as Mr. Pinault's wife, the actress Salma Hayek Pinault, who is often next to her husband in the front row of fashion shows, and who often wears Gucci and Balenciaga gowns on the red carpet.

The deal offers Artémis "increased diversity, both in terms of geographical footprint and business activities, to our other assets," Mr. Pinault said in a statement. "CAA's exceptional insight, relationships and access across key sectors, combined with their

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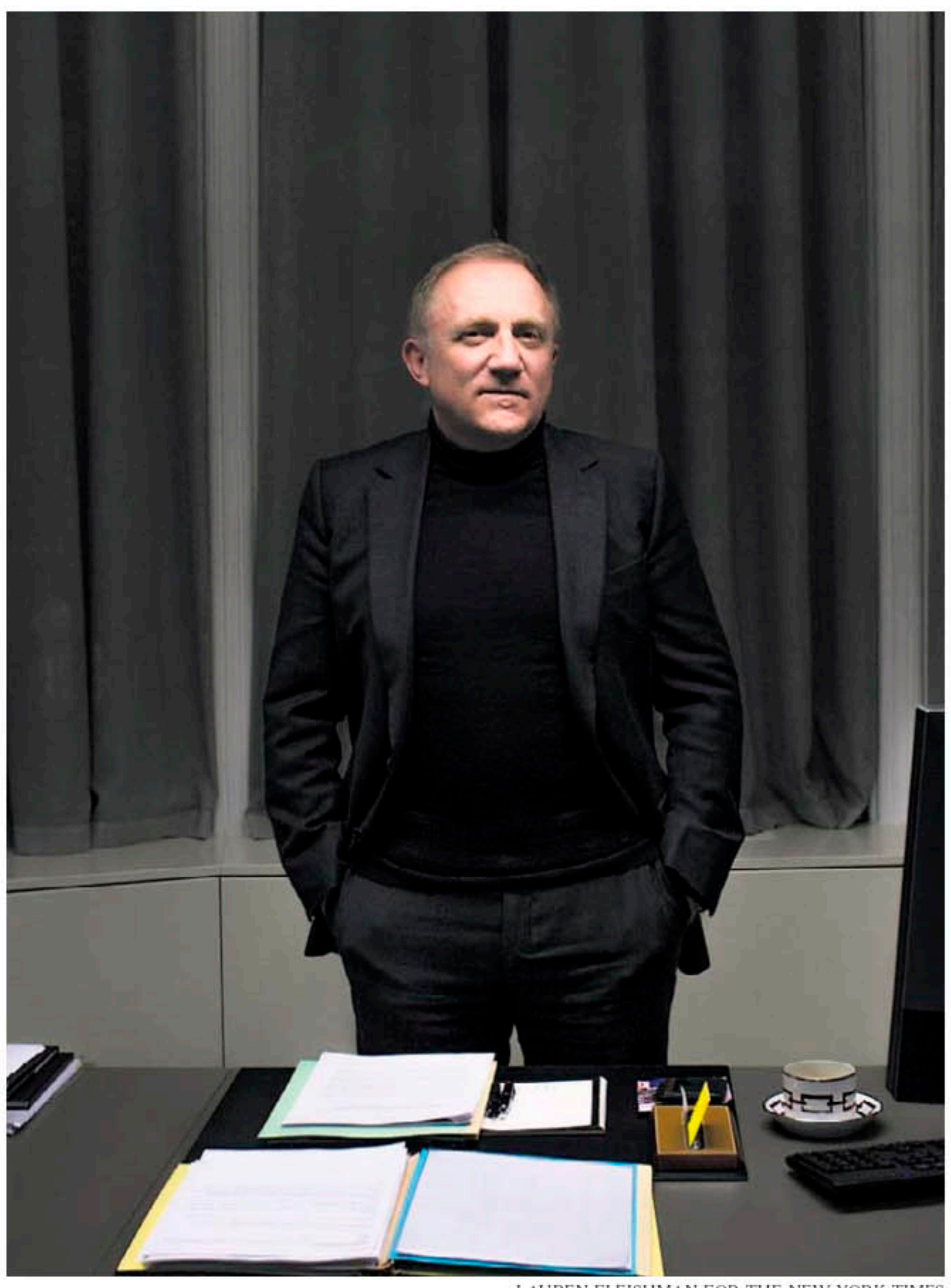


LAUREN FLEISHMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

François-Henri Pinault's move links the worlds of fashion and celebrity.

Nonprofits Seek to Stem News Crisis

By KATIE ROBERTSON

Many major philanthropic groups have increasingly focused their attention in recent years on helping struggling local newsrooms. Now they are joining forces.

On Thursday, more than 20 nonprofit organizations announced plans to invest a total of $500 million over the next five years in local media organizations, one of the biggest efforts yet to address the crisis in local news.

The initiative, called Press Forward, is spearheaded by the MacArthur Foundation and supported by organizations including the Knight Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Press Forward will use the $500 million to fund grants for existing local for-profit and nonprofit newsrooms, help build shared tools, provide resources to diverse outlets and those in historically underserved areas, and invest in nonpartisan public policy development that advances access to

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

4th Leader Pleads Guilty In FTX Case

By DAVID YAFFE-BELLANY and MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN

Ryan Salame, a former top executive at the cryptocurrency exchange FTX, pleaded guilty on Thursday to criminal charges linked to the sweeping fraud case against FTX's founder, Sam Bankman-Fried, a move that raises the pressure on Mr. Bankman-Fried ahead of his trial next month.

In a federal courtroom in downtown Manhattan, Mr. Salame pleaded guilty to a campaign finance law violation and a charge of operating an unlicensed money transmitting business.

Mr. Salame said he had made millions in political contributions at the direction of Mr. Bankman-Fried. The contributions were labeled loans from FTX's sister company, the crypto hedge fund Alameda Research.

"I understood that the loans would eventually be forgiven, and that I would never have to repay them," Mr. Salame said. Asked

CONTINUED ON PAGE B5

The Digest

COMPANIES

For Some Jobs, Walmart Will Cut Starting Pay

Walmart, the nation's largest private employer, is making adjustments to its pay scale that will mean some new store workers, like those fetching online orders, begin at a lower hourly pay rate than they would have a few months ago.

The change, which became effective in July and was first reported by The Wall Street Journal on Thursday, will create consistency in starting hourly pay across individual stores, said a spokeswoman, Anne Hatfield.

The exception would be jobs that require a higher skill set, like those in the deli, bakery and auto care departments. Ms. Hatfield said there would be no pay cuts for current employees.

Walmart Inc. announced in January that U.S. workers would get pay raises the following month, increasing starting wages to between $14 and $19 an hour. Starting wages currently ranged between $12 and $18 an hour, depending on location. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

AUTOMOBILES

Honda Says It Will Adopt Tesla Chargers for E.V.s

RUNGROJ YONGRIT/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Honda will join Ford, G.M. and other electric vehicle makers in adopting Tesla's charging technology, the company announced Thursday. The company said it would use Tesla's fast-charging port for its E.V. models that go on sale in North American starting in 2025.

Ford and General Motors announced similar deals with Tesla in June, and electric truck maker Rivian followed suit later that month.

Analysts say that Tesla's North American Charging Standard connector and cord are much lighter and easier to handle than the Combined Charging System used by the rest of the auto industry.

Tesla has about 17,000 Supercharger stations in the U.S. There are about 54,000 public charging stations in the U.S., according to the Department of Energy, but many charge much more slowly than the Tesla stations.

As more and more automakers switch to Tesla's connector, experts say it appears Tesla is on its way to becoming the industry-wide standard. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

WORK FORCE

Online Gig Work Grows, But With Few Protections

Online gig work is growing globally, particularly in the developing world, creating an important source of employment for women and young people in poorer countries where jobs are scarce, according to a World Bank report released Thursday.

The report estimates the number of global online gig workers at as many as 435 million people and says demand for gig work increased 41 percent between 2016 and the first quarter of 2023. That increase is generating concern, though, among worker rights advocates about the lack of job protections in the gig economy.

While location-based gig services like Uber, Lyft and TaskRabbit require labor like moving and delivery, online gig assignments can be largely done at home.

Namita Datta, lead author of the report, said online gig work provided women and underprivileged youth "a very interesting opportunity to participate in the labor market." *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

S&P 500 INDEX
−0.3%
4,451.14

DOW JONES INDUSTRIALS
+0.2%
34,500.73

NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX
−0.9%
13,748.83

10-YEAR TREASURY YIELD
4.26%
−0.044 points

CRUDE OIL (U.S.)
$86.87
−$0.67

GOLD (N.Y.)
$1,924.10
−$1.70

Big Tech Takes a Hit in Mixed Trading

By The Associated Press

Wall Street slipped in mixed trading Thursday as the threat of high interest rates continues to dog Big Tech stocks.

The S&P 500 fell 0.3 percent for its third straight loss. The Nasdaq composite was hit particularly

STOCKS & BONDS

hard by the drop for tech stocks, sinking 0.9 percent. The Dow Jones industrial average, which has less of an emphasis on tech, rose 0.2 percent.

Stocks felt pressure from the bond market, where yields rose earlier in the week after a report showed stronger growth for U.S. services industries last month than economists expected. Yields remained high after a report on Thursday said fewer U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than expected.

While such reports are encouraging for the economy, indicating that the long-predicted recession is not near, they could keep conditions humming strongly enough to push upward on inflation.

The Federal Reserve has already raised its main interest rate to the highest level in more than two decades in hopes of slowing the economy enough to drive inflation back down to its 2 percent target. It has come close, and inflation has cooled from its peak above 9 percent last summer, but the worry is that the last percentage point of improvement may be the toughest for the Fed.

"Yes, the economy has slowed and inflation has cooled, but employment continues to be a thorn in the side of the Fed, which has made softening the jobs market the cornerstone of its inflation battle," said Mike Loewengart, head of model portfolio construction at Morgan Stanley Global Investment Office.

High interest rates drag down on prices for every kind of stock. But they tend to most hurt stocks of technology companies and others bid up on expectations for high growth far in the future. Many of those stocks also tend to be the most influential on the S&P 500 because they're the biggest.

Apple is the dominant force on Wall Street because it's the most valuable stock, and it fell 2.9 percent to follow up on its 3.6 percent drop a day before.

Nvidia sank 1.7 percent to bring its loss for the week so far to 4.7 percent. It and a cohort of other stocks in the artificial-intelligence industry have soared this year on expectations that A.I. could mean explosive future growth in profits.

C3.ai tumbled 12.2 percent after it said late Wednesday that it no longer expects to be profitable in its final fiscal quarter of the year as it invests more in opportunities around generative A.I. Analysts also pointed to disappointing profit margin levels for the company during its latest quarter, which was the first of its fiscal year.

While most stocks on Wall Street fell, several helped to limit the losses.

WestRock, a maker of containerboard and other packaging, rose 4.2 percent after Smurfit Kappa Group said it was in discussions to combine the two companies and keep its headquarters in Ireland.

Power companies and other stocks seen as steadier investments also held up better than the rest of the market. Utility stocks in the S&P 500 rose 1.3 percent as a group. That was nearly double the gain of any of the other 10 sectors that make up the index.

In the bond market, the yield on the two-year Treasury initially jumped after the unemployment report, but eased as the day progressed. It slipped to 4.95 percent from 5.03 percent late Wednesday, but it remains above the 4.88 percent level where it started the week. The two-year Treasury yield tends to track expectations for the Fed.

Traders still expect the Fed to stand pat on interest rates at its next meeting later this month. But they're betting on a roughly 45 percent chance of another increase by the end of the year, according to data from CME Group.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans, fell to 4.26 percent from 4.3 percent late Wednesday.

The S&P 500 Index

Position of the S&P 500 index at 1-minute intervals on Thursday

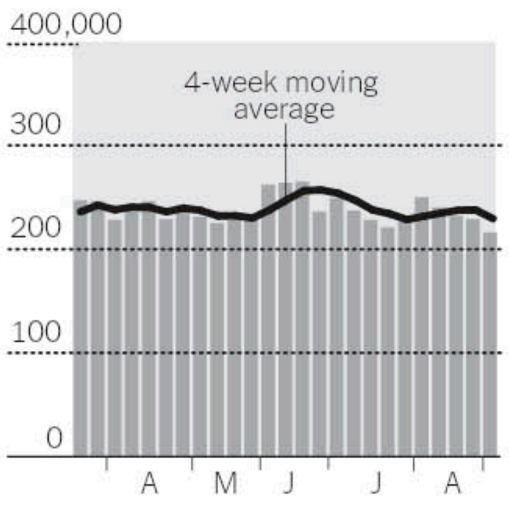
-- Previous Close: 4,465.48

Source: FactSet

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jobless Claims

Weekly number of people who have filed for unemployment benefits for the first time.



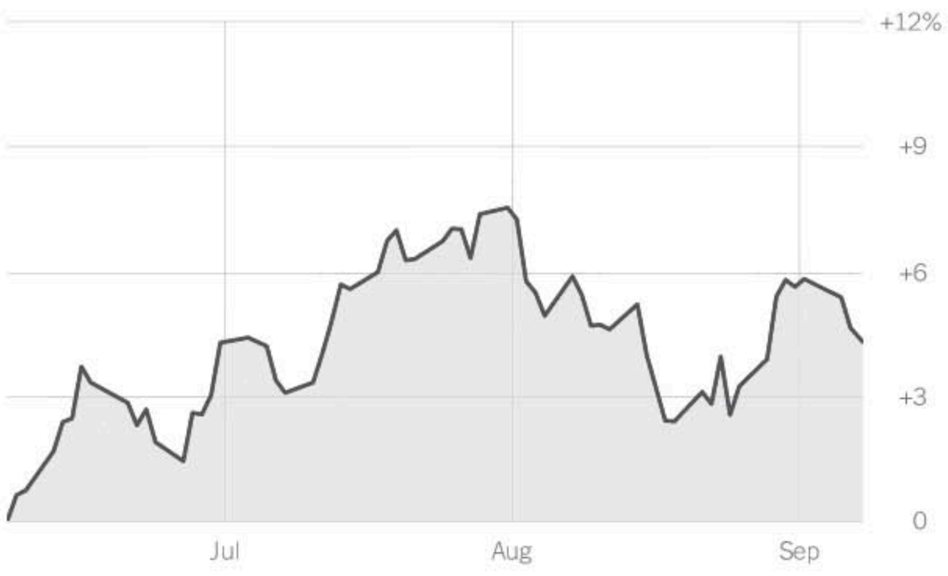
Source: Labor Department

THE NEW YORK TIMES

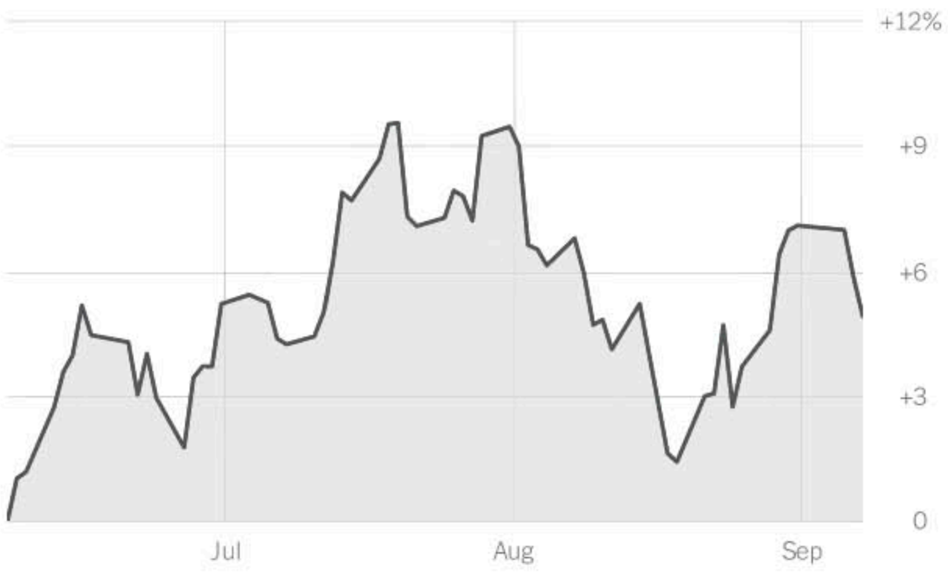
What Happened in Stock Markets Yesterday

POWERED BY FACTSET

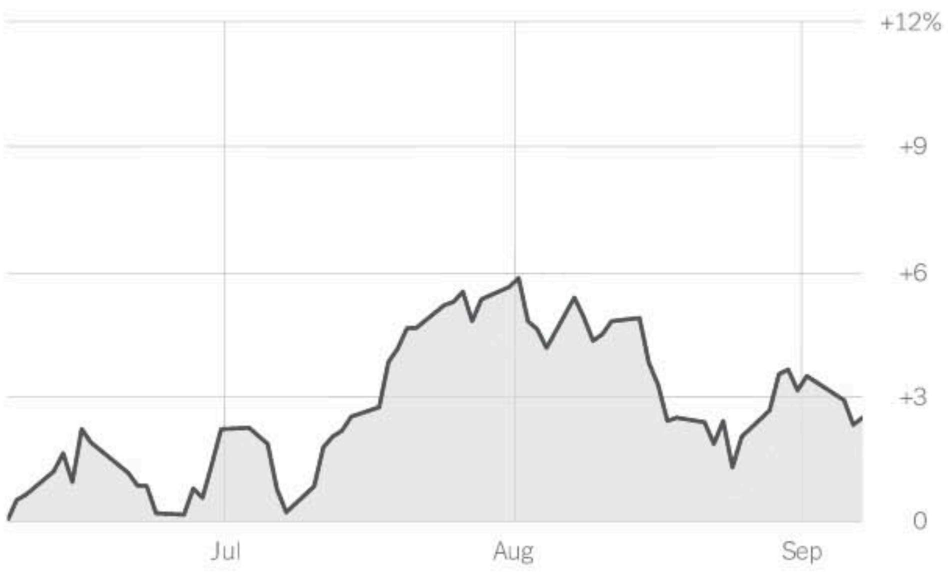
S&P 500 4,451.14 ↓−0.3%
3 month performance: **+4.3%**



Nasdaq Composite Index 13,748.83 ↓−0.9%
3 month performance: **+4.9%**



Dow Jones Industrials 34,500.73 ↑+0.2%
3 month performance: **+2.5%**



Best performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Centene (CNC)	$66.44	+4.9%
2. WestRock (WRK)	$33.23	+4.2
3. Intel Corp (INTC)	$38.18	+3.2
4. PG & E (PCG)	$16.88	+2.6
5. American Tower (AMT)	$182.55	+2.6
6. Church & Dwight (CHD)	$96.52	+2.5
7. Public Service Ent (PEG)	$60.16	+2.5
8. Cboe Global Markets (CBOE)	$153.56	+2.4
9. Eli Lilly & Co (LLY)	$573.23	+2.4
10. T-Mobile US (TMUS)	$137.28	+2.3

Worst performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Seagate Technology Hldgs. (STX)	$63.44	−10.9%
2. Align Technology (ALGN)	$340.93	−7.8
3. Insulet Corp. (PODD)	$178.53	−7.7
4. FMC Corp (FMC)	$76.10	−7.4
5. Skyworks Solutions (SWKS)	$98.38	−7.3
6. Qualcomm (QCOM)	$106.40	−7.2
7. Qorvo Inc (QRVO)	$98.72	−7.1
8. Kenvue (KVUE)	$20.99	−6.2
9. Rollins (ROL)	$35.72	−6.2
10. Teradyne (TER)	$99.69	−5.6

Most active

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE	VOLUME IN MIL.
1. Tesla (TSLA)	$251.49	−0.2%	114
2. Apple (AAPL)	$177.56	−2.9	112
3. Kenvue (KVUE)	$20.99	−6.2	103
4. Intel Corp (INTC)	$38.18	+3.2	67
5. Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	$106.59	−2.5	49
6. Amazon.com (AMZN)	$137.85	+1.8	46
7. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$462.41	−1.7	43
8. Ford Motor (F)	$11.96	−0.9	38
9. Bank of America (BAC)	$28.13	−0.9	35
10. Meta Platforms A (META)	$298.67	−0.2	33

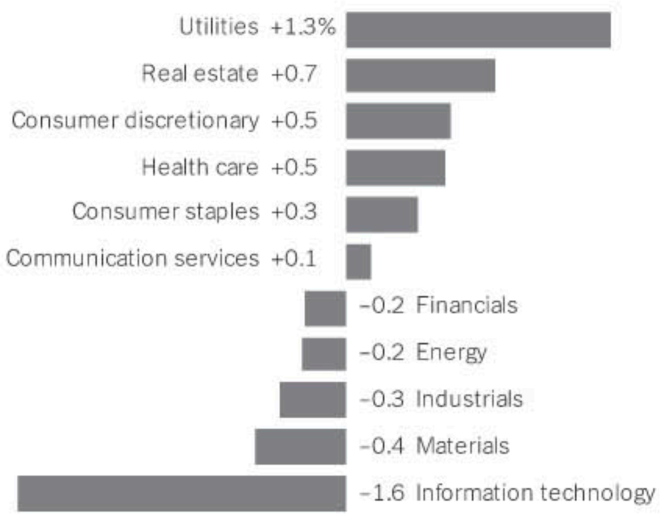
Regional and emerging markets

	TOTAL RETURN 1 YR	5 YRS	TOTAL ASSETS IN BIL.
1. Strategic Advisers Fidelity Emerging Markets Fund (FGOMX)	−17.5%	%	8.8
2. JPMorgan Emerging Markets Equity Fund Class R6 (JEMWX)	−15.0	+2.0	8.3
3. Strategic Advisers Emerging Markets Fund (FSAMX)	−17.3	−0.0	8.1
4. Martin Currie SMA-Shares Series EM Fund (LCSMX)	−19.0	+2.3	1.1
5. AQR Emerging Multi-Style II Fund Class I (QTELX)	−19.0	−1.2	0.5
6. VY JPMorgan Emerging Markets Equity Portfolio Class S2 (IJPTX)	−15.9	+1.2	0.3
7. DWS Emerging Markets Equity Fund - Class R6 (SEKRX)	−16.6		0.2
8. Ashmore Emerging Markets Equity Fund Institutional Class (EMFIX)	−18.2	+3.6	0.1
9. Driehaus Emerging Markets Small Cap Growth Fund (DRESX)	−10.4	+6.6	0.1
10. Ashmore Emerging Markets Frontier Equity Fund Institutional Class (EFEIX)	−13.2	−0.8	0.1

Source: Morningstar

Sector performance

S&P 500 SECTORS



How stock markets fared yesterday in Asia ...

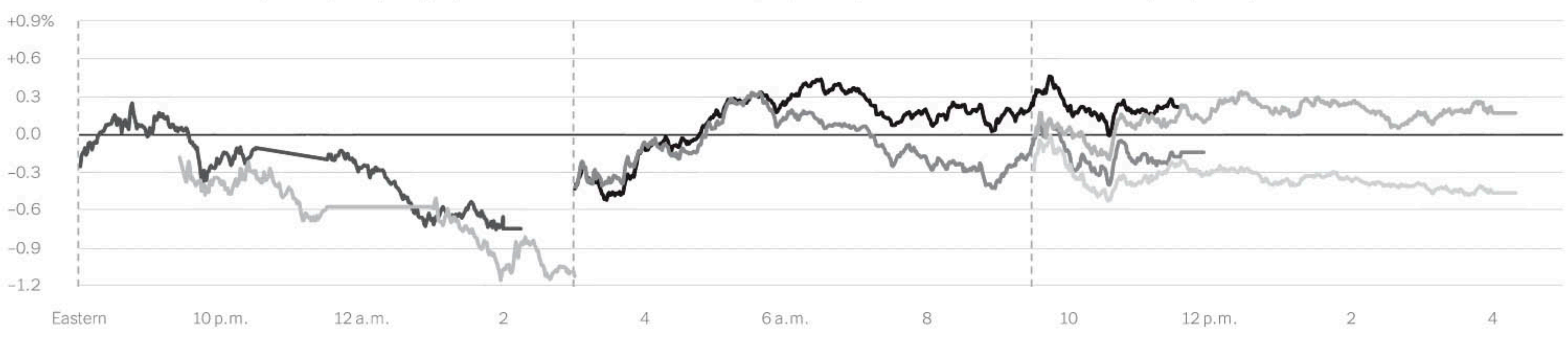
— Nikkei 225 (Japan): −0.8%
— Shanghai Composite (Shanghai): −1.1%

... in Europe

— FTSE 100 (London): +0.2%
— DAX (Frankfurt): −0.1%

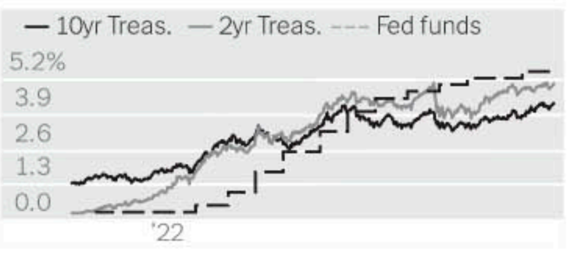
... and North America

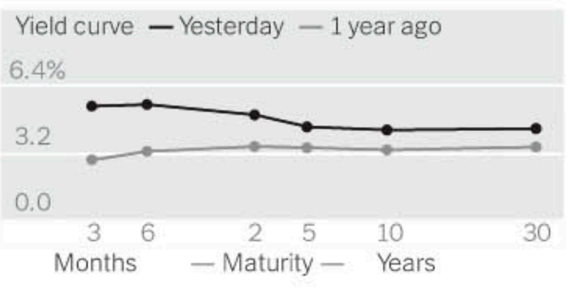
— Dow Jones Industrials (New York): +0.2%
— S&P/TSX (Toronto): −0.5%



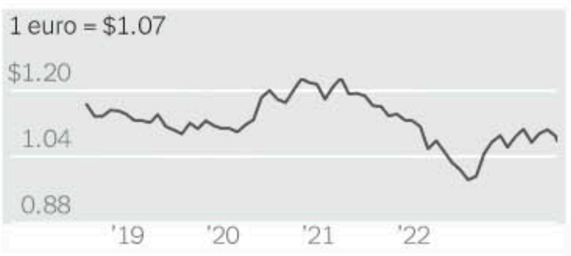
What Is Happening in Other Markets and the Economy

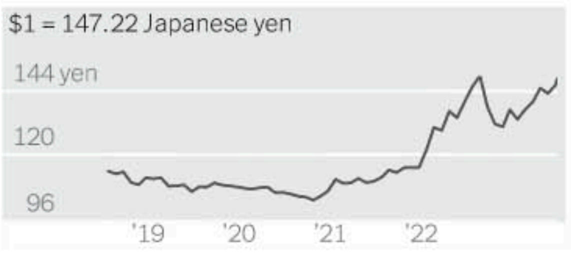
Bonds



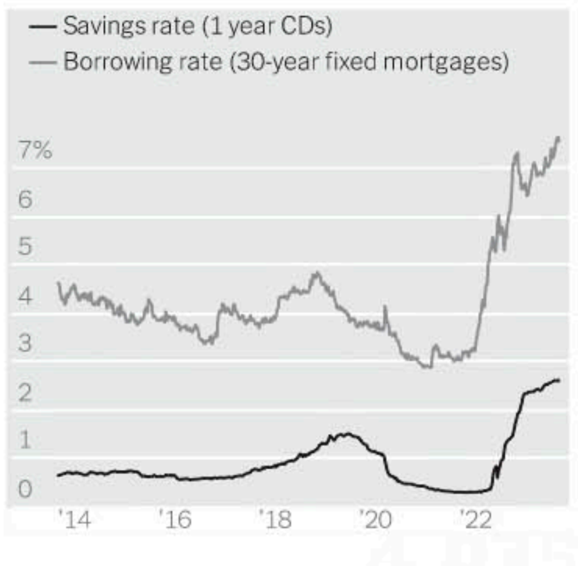


Currencies

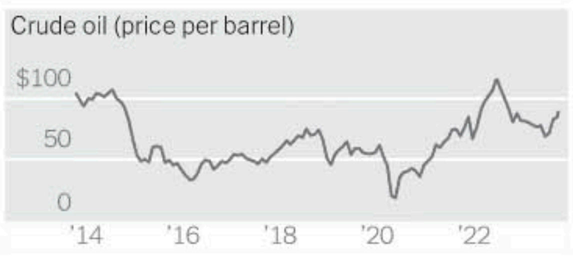


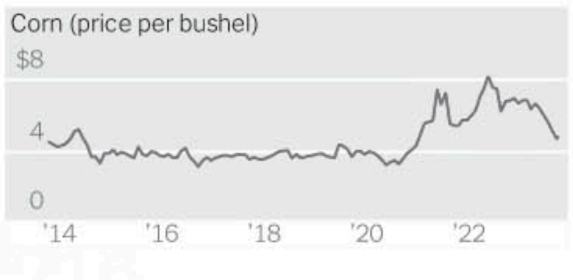


Consumer rates

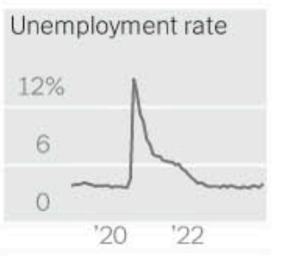


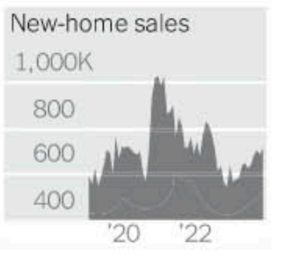
Commodities

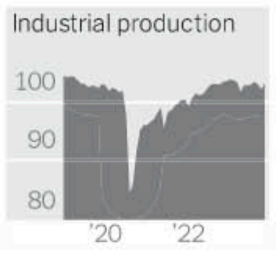




Economy







MEDIA | LABOR | LEGAL

Philanthropies Pledge $500 Million to Address Crisis in Local News

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE
news and information.

John Palfrey, the president of the MacArthur Foundation, said Press Forward aimed to help news outlets that did not have enough revenue to sustain their business. The goal, he added, is to eventually raise and invest $1 billion for the effort.

"There's extraordinary opportunity," Mr. Palfrey said in an interview. Many people are focused on finding ways to improve local news coverage, he said, but "they just simply don't have enough philanthropic capital to get it going, and we're going to provide at least a down payment on that."

The investment by Press Forward reflects the concern over the rapid shrinking and disappearance of local news organizations across the United States — and what that information void means for democracy. More than 20 percent of Americans now live in what are called news deserts, which are areas that have little or no independent news sources on local issues, or communities that are on the verge of becoming one, according to a 2022 report by Northwestern University's Medill School.

Some 2,500 newspapers have shut down since 2005 — and more continue to close. Declining revenue from print advertising and subscriptions has made it nearly impossible for struggling papers to survive, and those that are still around have a small fraction of the staff they once had. Digital news outlets and nonprofit newsrooms have sprung up across the United States, but not in numbers large enough to fill the gap.

According to the Northwestern report, most of the new outlets serve urban centers, leaving some economically struggling and rural communities at a loss. Without an independent local news source, the report said, residents don't have the information they need to make informed decisions about civic issues and governance, and that provides an opening for the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

"People are really now alarmed," said Alberto Ibargüen, the president of the Knight Foundation. "There is a new understanding of the importance of information in the management of community, in the management of democracy in America, that I believe simply wasn't there 15 years ago."

The MacArthur Foundation and the Knight Foundation are each contributing $150 million to the fund, with 20 other initial donors making up the rest. The MacArthur Foundation will set aside an additional $25 million to invest in for-profit businesses, rather than give grants, Mr. Palfrey said.

Grants from the pooled funds will be coordinated and managed by the Miami Foundation, a nonprofit community foundation. Most of the grants will be awarded beginning in 2024, and will focus on at least one of four areas: strengthening local newsrooms, scaling news infrastructure, closing inequalities in coverage and practice, and advancing public policies.

BRYCE VICKMARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

John Palfrey said Press Forward's goal was to eventually raise and invest $1 billion to help local news outlets.

Mr. Ibargüen said the advantage of Press Forward was that media organizations could submit an application for funding and have access to a range of large national foundations, rather than have to apply to each foundation.

"This, I hope, will be a much more efficient way of both sharing information about people seeking funding and about what models appear to be working," he said.

Philanthropies have increasingly been putting their money toward local news. A new study conducted by NORC, a research institution at the University of Chicago, in partnership with Media Impact Funders and the Lenfest Institute for Journalism, found that a third of the donors surveyed had funded journalism for the first time in the past five years. More than 70 percent of the donors in the study said their top priority was funding local news.

One example is the American Journalism Project, which gives grants to existing nonprofit newsrooms. It has raised more than $150 million and has supported 41 news organizations since it was started in 2019 by John Thornton,

'There has to be other sources of revenue.'

John Palfrey, president of the MacArthur Foundation, on finding funding for local journalism.

who founded The Texas Tribune, and Elizabeth Green, a co-founder of Chalkbeat and Votebeat.

The Tribune is one of the biggest nonprofit newsrooms in the country and has helped to usher in new regional digital start-ups, but it recently had its first layoffs in its 14-year history. Chalkbeat and Votebeat are topic-specific nonprofit outlets, focusing on education reporting and election and voting coverage.

The Knight Foundation has invested more than $632 million in local news efforts since 2005, and Mr. Ibargüen said its Press Forward investment was in addition to continuous annual spending on journalism projects.

Mr. Palfrey said Press Forward planned to bring in new donors and raise more money, but "we know that even with the maximum we can do pushing really hard, we're not going to have enough" to solve the local news crisis.

"There has to be other sources of revenue, and some of that of course is advertising and subscriptions, but I actually believe that public policy has a role to play," he said.

CPAP Maker Settles for $479 Million Over Defects in Breathing Machines

By CHRISTINA JEWETT

Philips Respironics has agreed to a $479 million partial settlement on claims over flaws in the company's breathing machines that spewed gases and flecks of foam into the airways of consumers and that spawned recalls involving millions of the devices, lawyers for plaintiffs in the lawsuit announced on Thursday.

As one segment of continuing class-action lawsuits over the devices, the agreement covers only monetary reimbursements to users of the devices and vendors who might have financed replacements for consumers, according to the lawyers. The economic claims amount is uncapped, which will permit other device users to apply for compensation.

This tentative settlement, which is subject to federal court approval, does not address other significant claims in the plaintiffs'

Lawsuit links flaking foam and gases to health problems.

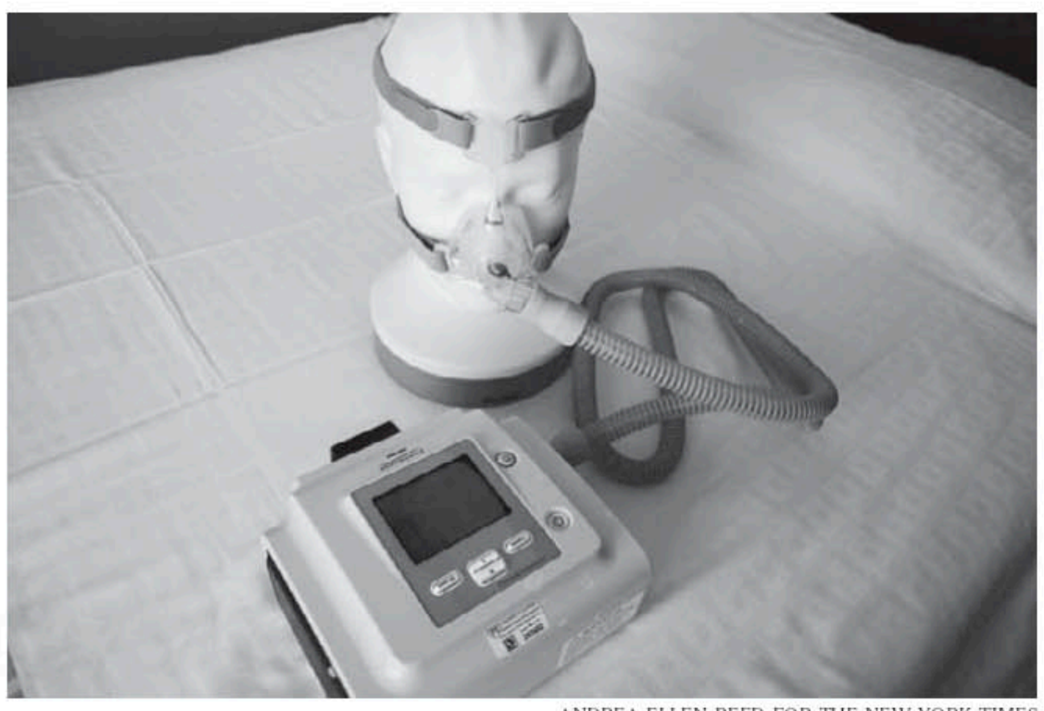
cases involving personal injury or the cost of medical care related to use of the breathing machines. Philips did not admit wrongdoing or liability as part of the proposed deal.

The company has faced a multiyear setback, after beginning recalls in the United States of about five million of its breathing machines, which are intended for people with sleep apnea and other maladies. The lawsuits have claimed that flaking foam and gasses emitted from the machines were linked to health issues including respiratory illnesses, lung cancer and death. The foam was used in the machines to reduce noise and vibration.

In June 2021, the Food and Drug Administration announced a recall of Philips machines that also included BiPAP devices and ventilators made since 2009, warning that foam deterioration in the products could cause "serious injury" to users. Philips initially released a memo to doctors saying the foam breakdown posed risks of "toxic carcinogenic effects," but the company has since released updates reporting a far lower level of concern.

"We are confident in these claims and we look forward to holding Philips accountable for the physical harms they caused patients," the plaintiffs' lawyers said in a statement.

Millions of people suffer from sleep apnea, a condition associated with interrupted breathing that carries a number of risks, including strokes, heart attacks and



ANDREA ELLEN REED FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Philips Respironics OmniLab Advanced+ breathing machine was one of several ventilator models that the company recalled in 2021, affecting about five million devices.

possible cognitive decline from decreased oxygen supply.

The spate of recalls in the last few years frustrated doctors and device users, who anguished over whether to continue using the machines and face potential health hazards, or forgo any treatment. Rival companies were hard-pressed to fill orders from those seeking replacements, leaving many consumers with no options.

The agreement announced on Thursday would provide compensation ranging from about $50 to $1,500 to each consumer, in addition to $100 for each device returned to Philips. The company said it replaced and delivered nearly 2.5 million devices for U.S. consumers and suppliers.

"Patient safety and quality are our top priorities, and we want patients to feel confident when using their Philips Respironics devices," the company said in a statement.

The F.D.A. and some experts have criticized Philips for not notifying consumers when it first learned of potential flaws with some of its devices. Agency and court records show that concerns at Philips emerged in 2015. More than 105,000 injuries and 385 reports of deaths that were possibly related to the foam breakdown in Philips machines have been reported to the F.D.A.

The U.S. Department of Justice has been in touch with Philips about a possible consent decree to address problems related with the recall process, the company said in an earnings disclosure in July. Under a subpoena issued in April 2022 as part of another investigation into the events leading up to the recall, Philips continued to supply information, the July report said.

Warner Bros. Suspends Deals With Top Television Creators As Writers' Strike Continues

By BROOKS BARNES
and JOHN KOBLIN

When television and movie writers went on strike in May, studios quickly suspended certain first-look deals — mostly those for lesser-established writers. Star show creators like Mindy Kaling and J.J. Abrams were kept on the payroll. Worried about keeping them happy, even during a walkout, studios left their multimillion-dollar deals alone, shielding them from the pain of the strike.

No more.

In an escalation of the standoff between studios and the Writers Guild of America — it has entered its fifth month, with no end in sight — Warner Bros. moved late Wednesday to suspend deals with the 1 percent of television writers. That includes Ms. Kaling, a creator of the Max series "The Sex Lives of College Girls," and Mr. Abrams, whose recent television efforts include "Duster," a coming thriller set in the 1970s, according to two people briefed on the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private suspension notices.

Warner Bros. also suspended deals with Greg Berlanti ("Superman & Lois") and Bill Lawrence ("Ted Lasso"), among others, the people said.

A spokeswoman for Warner Bros. declined to comment. Representatives for the writers either declined to comment or did not return calls. A spokesman for the Writers Guild of America had no immediate response.

Top writers have contractual protections that will ultimately enable them to receive all the compensation promised in their original deals. Warner Bros. is doing what is known as "suspend and extend," according to the people briefed on the matter, meaning that the studio will halt payments for the duration of the strike — and then, when work resumes, extend the contracts by the amount of time they were suspended.

The suspension of the A-lister deals suggests that the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which bargains on behalf of studios, expects the strike to continue into the fall. (A representative for the studio alliance declined to comment.) Studio executives had signaled that Labor Day was an inflection point; the industry's sitting idle beyond that date would have a severe impact on the 2024 release calendar, particularly for movies.

Warner Bros. Discovery said in a securities filing on Tuesday that the Hollywood strikes — tens of

'We are trying to get this resolved in a way that's really fair.'

David Zaslav, chief executive of Warner Bros. Discovery.

thousands of actors joined writers on picket lines in mid-July, the first time both unions have been on strike at the same time since 1960 — would negatively affect its 2023 earnings by up to $500 million.

"We are trying to get this resolved in a way that's really fair and everyone feels fairly treated," David Zaslav, the chief executive of Warner Bros. Discovery, said at a Goldman Sachs event on Wednesday. "Having said that, in our guidance, we said that this would be resolved by September. And here we are in September. This is really a very unusual event — the last time it happened was

LEIGH VOGEL/GETTY IMAGES

JEROD HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES

Mindy Kaling, a creator of "The Sex Lives of College Girls," is among the writers whose deals were suspended. J.J. Abrams's deal was also suspended. The move can exert more pressure on the guild. Warner Bros. also suspended deals with Greg Berlanti and Bill Lawrence ("Ted Lasso"), among others.

1960."

Suspending the deals of prominent writers is one way for the studios to try to put pressure on the Writers Guild. During the last writers' strike, in 2007, a small group of showrunners agitated for union leadership to settle with the studios as the stalemate wore on. That strike lasted 100 days; Thursday was the current strike's 128-day mark.

Studio officials and Writers Guild negotiators have not met formally since Aug. 23, when talks broke off for the second time and the companies publicly released their latest offer in an appeal to rank-and-file members. Studios were hoping the offer would look good enough for members to pressure their leaders to make a deal.

But the move seemed to have the opposite effect, instilling the 11,500-member Writers Guild with renewed resolve to keep fighting. "The companies' counteroffer is neither nothing, nor nearly enough," guild leaders said in a note to members on Aug. 24. "We will continue to advocate for proposals that fully address our issues rather than accept half measures."

The studios defended their proposal as offering the highest wage increase to writers in more than three decades. The studios also said that they had offered "landmark protections" against artificial intelligence, and that they vowed to offer some degree of streaming viewership data to the guild, information that had previously been held under lock and key.

Both the writers and the actors have called this moment "existential," arguing that the streaming era has deteriorated their working conditions as well as their compensation levels.

Nicole Sperling contributed reporting.

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INTERNATIONAL | ACQUISITIONS

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Vehicle carrier ships being built along the Yangtze River in Yizheng. China's car industry has quadrupled exports in just three years, surpassing Japan this year as the world leader.

China Builds a Fleet of Ships to Move a Glut of Cars

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

Consumer confidence has shown few signs of recovering even after the lifting of nearly three years of stringent "zero Covid" policies.

When Chinese households buy cars, they increasingly choose electric vehicles from local manufacturers, which lead global production of EVs. The result is an immense supply of gasoline-powered models that Chinese consumers no longer want but that still sell abroad.

Chinese carmakers are stuck with unused factory capacity to build about 15 million gasoline-powered cars a year. They have responded by sending more than four million cars this year to foreign markets, at bargain prices.

"Why have they driven into exports? Because they have to — what are you going to do, close a factory?" said Bill Russo, a former chief executive of Chrysler China who is now chief executive of Automobility, a Shanghai consultancy.

All over the world, Chinese automakers are taking market share. Steel and electronics used in cars are cheap in China, giving automakers here an advantage. Local governments in China also give the companies nearly free land, loans at near-zero interest and other subsidies.

After years of quality gains and technology improvements, Chinese cars, even ones with out-of-fashion combustion engines, are turning heads at industry events like the Munich auto show this week.

In Australia, Chinese automakers have passed South Korean rivals in sales, and are catching up with Japanese competitors. China has also expanded exports quickly to Mexico and Britain, and is beginning to increase shipments to Belgium and Spain, which have important car-unloading ports that serve as a gateway to other European Union countries.

A lack of ships has held China back from exporting even more.

"They are building cars a lot faster than they are building ships," said Michael Dunne, a former president of General Motors Indonesia.

That is starting to change.

Chinese automakers like BYD and Chery, and the European and Singaporean shipping lines that transport cars for them, have placed almost all of the orders now pending worldwide for 170 car-carrying vessels. Before China's auto export boom, only four a year were being ordered, said Daniel Nash, head of vehicle carriers at VesselsValue, a London shipping data firm.

Shipyards up and down the

HECTOR RETAMAL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

An assembly line at a factory of Chinese automaker Nio in Hefei, in China's eastern Anhui province.

Yangtze River, with thousands of workers, clang and rattle from dawn until far into the night. The frenzy was visible last Friday at the Jinling Shipyard, where workers have nearly finished two car-carrying ships for Eastern Pacific Shipping of Singapore.

Li Cha, a welder, said he was doing 12-hour shifts with a two-hour break at midday to bicycle home for lunch. Floodlights illuminate the shipyard by night so that teams can do particularly pressing tasks then, like installing electrical systems.

The incentive to build more ships is clear. The cost per day for an automaker to hire a car-carrying ship has soared to $105,000, from $16,000 two years ago, Mr. Nash said. BYD is spending close to $100 million apiece for the construction of what will be the six largest car carriers ever built.

Trump-era tariffs are holding back sales to the United States.

Most of the vessels are scheduled for completion in the next three years.

Europe is becoming the main target for most Chinese automakers. They are using brands like Volvo and MG, acquired many years ago, to win greater acceptance in Europe.

The state-owned Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation, which acquired Britain's fabled MG brand in 2007, is exporting inexpensive cars from China not just to Britain but also to Australia. MG has re-emerged in Australia this year as one of the country's best-selling car brands.

General Motors' joint venture with SAIC has begun shipping Chevrolet Aveo subcompact cars to Mexico, for sale in June starting at $16,300.

One big market is conspicuously missing among leading destinations for Chinese car exports: the United States. Almost no Chinese cars are going there now, and few are expected to do so soon.

When the Trump administration imposed tariffs on imports from China in 2018 and 2019, the first batch included 25 percent levies on gasoline-powered and electric cars and on gasoline engines and electric car batteries. Not only are the tariffs still in place, but they were issued under legislation that gives broad discretion to the United States trade representative, currently Katherine Tai, to increase them if needed.

China Sees Exports Drop Once Again

By KEITH BRADSHER

BEIJING — The value of China's exports to the world dropped 8.8 percent in August from a year earlier, the government announced on Thursday, the fourth straight month of sliding overseas sales.

At the same time, imports fell 7.3 percent, China's General Administration of Customs said.

China's economy, the world's second largest, is under a microscope. Since the spring, growth has sagged and home prices have suffered, shaking consumer and investor confidence. The new data reflects continued weak demand in China and abroad.

The Background

Economists had expected the August trade numbers to be slightly worse. A Reuters survey forecast that exports had fallen 9.2 percent in August and imports 9 percent. Exports had plunged 14.5 percent from a year earlier in July.

Many multinational companies, especially large retailers in the United States, have become worried about the dependence of their supply chains on China as geopolitical tensions have increased in recent years and as international trade disputes have intensified, particularly between the United States and China.

China's "zero Covid" measures during the pandemic, particularly the weekslong lockdowns of Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and other industrial centers and ports, led to shipping delays as well as the departure from China of many expatriate managers for multinationals.

With pandemic concerns now fading, households around the world, including in China, have shifted their spending patterns toward travel, restaurant meals and other services.

These trends were reflected in the details of the August numbers. Exports of computers, a category that China has led for years, fell 18.2 percent in value from August 2022. Exports of medical and surgical instruments, which had boomed during the pandemic, were down 7.1 percent last month.

But exports of some products began to stabilize: Overseas sales of household appliances like refrigerators and washing machines, which fell in July, rose 11.4 percent in August.

Imports of agricultural products were down 7.9 percent from a year earlier, while imports of crude oil were up half a percentage point.

Why It Matters

Export and import statistics provide one of the early indications each month of how the Chinese economy fared in the preceding month. China relies heavily on running very large trade surpluses every month as a way to create tens of millions of jobs, and that has become particularly important this year as youth unemployment has surged.

Exports have become even more important in the last couple of years as China has confronted a sharp slowdown in the housing market, after years of rampant speculation that drove apartment prices up tenfold or more in many Chinese cities.

The data released Thursday was the latest sign that demand for China's goods may have begun to bottom out. "Less bad exports and imports add to our conviction that July was likely the darkest hour for economic activity in China," said Louise Loo, an economist in the Singapore office of Oxford Economics, a consulting firm.

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05 HONDA 5FNRL38765B082200
13 BMW WBA3B3C59DF541676
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07 CADILLAC 1GYFK66827R232202
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10 KIA KNAFW6A31A5180496
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11 ISUZU JALE5W161B7901190
10 CHRYSLER 2A4RR5D12AR492903
09 NISSAN 5N1AR18B49C616586
12 JEEP 1C4NJRFB7CD689855
17 NISSAN KNMAT2MT1HP592068
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17 HYUNDAI 5NPD84LF7HH025865
15 DODGE 2C3CDXFG1FH867379
12 HYUNDAI 5NPEB4AC2CH380941
22 NISSAN 1N4BL4DV9NN418005
21 KIA 5XYRG4LC3MG015883
15 MITSUB 4A4AR3AU9FE058853
Following Vehicle Sold As Salvage
08 INFINITI JNKAY01F28M656672
08 SUBARU JF1SG65688H726213
12 BMW WBA3C1C54CF433417
CASH ONLY Inspect ½ Hr. Prior to Sale
City Marshal Ileana Rivera
Phone(718)238 7770

Kering Chief Strikes Deal for Majority Stake in Top Talent Agency

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

widely regarded level of collaboration and innovation, gives the company a formidable role in driving global opportunities."

CAA has been led by the powerhouse team of Bryan Lourd, Kevin Huvane and Richard Lovett, and they will remain as chairmen, according to a news release about the deal. Mr. Lourd will be named chief executive when the deal closes.

Along with the appointment of the music producer Pharrell Williams as creative director of Louis Vuitton men's wear, the CAA acquisition reflects just how important access to celebrity has become to the fashion world — and how important fashion is to celebrities. Especially during the actors' strike, as commercial work with brands remains one of the few avenues of income and profile-raising that the union, SAG-AFTRA, approves.

In 2010, the private equity firm TPG took a 35 percent stake in CAA, then broadened its hold on

STEVE MARCUS/REUTERS

The actress and singer Zendaya is among the celebrity clients represented by Creative Artists Agency, one of Hollywood's biggest talent agencies.

the talent agency to 53 percent four years later. Artémis is acquiring that majority stake, according to the news release, though it did not specify the price.

The agency's rivals, meanwhile, have raced to scale up to strengthen their negotiating power with streaming powerhouses like Amazon, Netflix and Apple.

United Talent Agency, which represents celebrities like Chris Pratt, Bad Bunny and Lizzo, bought the literary agency Fletcher & Company in January after acquiring the London-based Curtis Brown agency last year. The Endeavor Group, a CAA rival, acquired full control of the wrestling business Ultimate Fighting Championship in 2021 ahead of Endeavor's initial public offering. This year, Endeavor struck a deal to merge UFC with World Wide Wrestling as part of a new company.

As these talent agencies grow — and further intertwine themselves with fashion — new questions may emerge about the nature of these relationships. Even if the new CAA is separate from Kering, for example, would LVMH, the world's dominant luxury group, want to pay millions to celebrities to represent its brands when it knows that a percentage of that payment will enrich a company with a relationship to its competitor?

After all, "even if it's managed separately, this offers enormous access to talent," Mr. Burke said.

The CAA acquisition is the latest in a series of moves from Mr. Pinault. This year, Kering bought a 30 percent stake in Valentino, the Roman fashion brand and red carpet staple, with an option to acquire the whole thing by 2028. That deal followed the Kering purchase of Creed, the high-end fragrance brand, for $3.83 billion.

And Kering itself has also ventured into film. Saint Laurent became the first luxury fashion brand with a movie subsidiary when it introduced Saint Laurent Productions in April; its debut short, directed by Pedro Almodóvar, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in May. (Kering became an official partner of the film festival in 2015.)

As to whether other luxury moguls might follow Mr. Pinault's lead and look to acquire their own talent agency, Mr. Burke added, "I'm never surprised by anyone in fashion following someone else's smart idea."

COURTS | GOVERNMENT

MARTA LAVANDIER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

FTX filed for bankruptcy last year in a collapse that shook the crypto industry. Its leader, Sam Bankman-Fried, will stand trial next month.

Former FTX Executive Is 4th to Plead Guilty Ahead of C.E.O.'s Trial

JEFFERSON SIEGEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ryan Salame, left, pleaded guilty on Thursday to a campaign finance law violation and a charge of operating an unlicensed money transmitting business.

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

whether he was pleading guilty to the counts, he said, "Yes, Your Honor."

Mr. Salame (pronounced SA-LEM), who appeared in court in a blue suit, a striped tie and blue socks designed with orange Bitcoin logos, will pay a $6 million fine and more than $5 million in restitution to FTX, and will forfeit two properties in Lenox, Mass., along with a Porsche automobile. He could be sentenced to up to 10 years in a federal prison.

Mr. Salame, 30, who ran FTX's subsidiary in the Bahamas and was a prolific donor to Republican politicians, is the fourth executive in Mr. Bankman-Fried's circle of close advisers to admit to criminal conduct since FTX collapsed in November. Three others — Nishad Singh, Caroline Ellison and Gary Wang — have already pleaded guilty to fraud charges and agreed to cooperate against Mr. Bankman-Fried. A representative for federal prosecutors said Mr. Salame was not cooperating with the investigation.

FTX filed for bankruptcy last year in a stunning collapse that has become a symbol of crypto industry hubris. With the help of Mr. Salame, Mr. Bankman-Fried had turned FTX into a household name, endorsed by celebrities and politicians. Then the company imploded over a few days, and customers lost more than $8 billion in deposits.

Mr. Bankman-Fried, 31, was arrested in December and charged with seven criminal counts, including wire fraud and securities fraud. He is accused of using billions of dollars in FTX's customer funds to finance lavish real estate purchases, political donations and investments in other companies.

He has pleaded not guilty, and his trial is scheduled to begin on Oct. 3. Last month, Mr. Bankman-Fried's bail was revoked and he was sent to jail after a judge ruled that he had twice tried to interfere with witnesses in the case.

A spokesman for Mr. Bankman-Fried declined to comment. Damian Williams, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said Mr. Salame's illegal campaign contributions had been part of an unlawful political influence campaign that "helped FTX grow faster and larger by operating outside of the law."

Mr. Salame's lawyer, Jason Linder, said, "Ryan looks forward to putting this chapter behind him and moving forward with his life."

Mr. Salame also took part in a scheme that enabled FTX to take money from U.S. customers through accounts that Alameda had with a few U.S. banks, according to the charging document. The accounts were opened as trading accounts and were not approved to accept deposits from crypto customers.

For years, Mr. Salame was one of Mr. Bankman-Fried's top advisers. A native of the Berkshires, Mr. Salame started working at Alameda, which Mr. Bankman-Fried ran in Hong Kong at the time. When Mr. Bankman-Fried moved FTX to the Bahamas, Mr. Salame was the point person who communicated with the local government.

As FTX grew, Mr. Salame became one of crypto's wealthiest

Three others have already pleaded guilty to fraud charges.

executives and used some of his wealth to buy popular restaurants in the Berkshires. He received $87 million in bonuses and loans from Alameda, according to court records, and was known for his taste for private jets and expensive cars.

Mr. Salame also became active in the Washington political scene, styling himself as a "budding Republican megadonor." He donated $24 million in the 2022 midterm elections, mostly to Republicans, and started dating Michelle Bond, a crypto lobbyist who made a losing bid for Congress as a Republican from Long Island, N.Y.

The implosion of Mr. Bankman-Fried's business turned Mr. Salame into a target for federal prosecutors. In April, the F.B.I. searched the Potomac, Md., home he shared with Ms. Bond. Agents seized phones belonging to Mr. Salame and Ms. Bond.

Mr. Salame was also directly implicated in the charges against Mr. Bankman-Fried. In legal documents, prosecutors have claimed that Mr. Bankman-Fried enlisted his executives in a "straw donor" scheme to avoid limits on campaign contributions. They said Mr. Bankman-Fried had recruited the executives as proxies to donate tens of millions of dollars to both parties, effectively on behalf of the company. A revised indictment against Mr. Bankman-Fried identified Mr. Salame's donations as part of the scheme.

Prosecutors dropped the campaign finance charge against Mr. Bankman-Fried, citing procedural issues with his extradition from the Bahamas. But in a court filing last month, the prosecutors said they would use the campaign finance allegations to support the other charges that Mr. Bankman-Fried faces.

Benjamin Weiser contributed reporting. Jack Begg contributed research.

Biden Says He Will Nominate a Former F.A.A. Deputy to Lead the Agency

By MARK WALKER

WASHINGTON — President Biden announced Thursday that he planned to nominate Michael G. Whitaker, who served as the No. 2 official at the Federal Aviation Administration during the Obama administration, to become the agency's next permanent leader.

Mr. Whitaker currently serves as the chief operating officer for Supernal, a Hyundai Motor company that is developing air taxis. He was the F.A.A.'s deputy administrator from 2013 to 2016 and has also been an executive at United Airlines.

'America needs a confirmed F.A.A. administrator, and Mike Whitaker is the right leader for the job.'

Pete Buttigieg, the Transportation Department secretary.

Why It Matters: The F.A.A. has lacked a permanent leader for 17 months.

The F.A.A. has been without permanent leadership since Stephen Dickson, a former Delta Air Lines executive and an appointee of President Donald J. Trump, stepped down last year.

Mr. Biden's first nominee for the post, Phillip A. Washington, the chief executive of Denver International Airport, withdrew from consideration in March after running into resistance in the Senate.

The failure of Mr. Washington's nomination has prolonged the leadership void atop the agency. The F.A.A. official who served as acting administrator after Mr. Dickson's departure, Billy Nolen, left the agency in June.

Polly Trottenberg, the deputy transportation secretary, has been serving as the F.A.A.'s acting administrator, but she will have to turn over the reins to another temporary leader in late October because of a federal law that limits how long she can run the agency on an acting basis.

Background: It's been a bumpy stretch for the airline industry.

Mr. Whitaker would take the helm of the F.A.A. at an eventful time.

Travelers have flocked to the skies as the coronavirus pandemic has receded, and a series of near collisions around the country has raised concerns about safety. A New York Times investigation published last month found that near misses involving commercial airliners have been happening far more frequently than previously known.

Passengers have also endured a string of delays and cancellations, including when an F.A.A. system outage in January forced a halt to flights nationwide.

In Washington, Congress faces a Sept. 30 deadline to reauthorize the F.A.A., giving lawmakers an opportunity to leave their imprint on the nation's aviation policies. The House passed a bill in July that would reauthorize the agency for the next five years, but the Senate has yet to act. Lawmakers may end up passing an extension to buy themselves more time.

CHRIS J. RATCLIFFE/BLOOMBERG

Michael G. Whitaker's nomination will go before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

What's Next: The Senate will consider the nomination.

Mr. Whitaker's nomination will go before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, the panel where Mr. Washington's nomination ran aground.

Mr. Washington had spent most of his career in the Army and at transit agencies, and Republicans senators painted him as unqualified to lead the F.A.A. But Mr. Whitaker has a long résumé in the aviation industry, so he is likely to fare better on that front. A lawyer by training, he became certified as a private pilot during his stint as the F.A.A.'s deputy administrator.

"America needs a confirmed F.A.A. administrator, and Mike Whitaker is the right leader for the job," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in a statement. "He knows aviation, he knows safety, he knows the F.A.A. and he knows how to manage and modernize large organizations."

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, the top Republican on the Commerce Committee, was noncommittal about the president's selection.

"After several near misses, chronic air traffic controller staffing shortages and ongoing problems with implementing new technology at the F.A.A.," Mr. Cruz said in a statement, "we must carefully evaluate Mike Whitaker's qualifications, experience and temperament to determine whether he is the right person to lead the agency at this critical juncture."

2 Senators Propose Bipartisan Framework for Laws Regulating Artificial Intelligence

By CECILIA KANG

WASHINGTON — Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut, and Senator Josh Hawley, Republican of Missouri, plan to announce a sweeping framework to regulate artificial intelligence, in the latest effort by Congress to catch up with the technology.

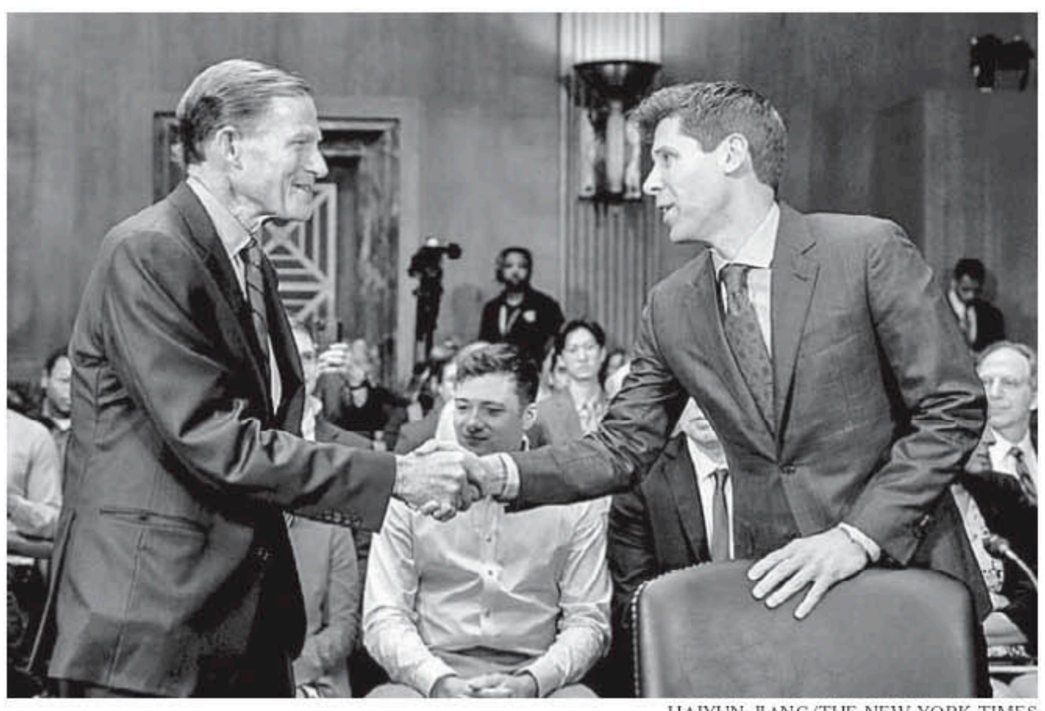
The leaders of the Senate judiciary's subcommittee for privacy, technology and law said in interviews on Thursday that their framework will include requirements for the licensing and auditing of A.I., the creation of an independent federal office to oversee the technology, liability for companies for privacy and civil rights violations, and requirements for data transparency and safety standards.

The lawmakers plan to highlight their proposals in an A.I. hearing on Tuesday, which will feature Brad Smith, Microsoft's president, and William Dally, the chief scientist for the A.I. chip maker Nvidia. Mr. Blumenthal and Mr. Hawley plan to introduce bills from the framework.

On Wednesday, top tech executives including Elon Musk, Microsoft's Satya Nadella and OpenAI's Sam Altman will meet with the Senate leader, Chuck Schumer, and other lawmakers in a separate closed-door meeting on A.I. regulations.

Since the release of the ChatGPT chatbot in November, lawmakers in Washington have raced to educate themselves on A.I.'s risks and opportunities to create rules for the industry. Mr. Blumenthal said lawmakers did not want to repeat the mistakes they made in failing to agree on privacy, safety and security laws for social media companies.

"We are really moving very forcefully and promptly toward legislation," said Mr. Blumenthal, chair of the subcommittee. "Our goal is not only to educate and inform the public but to reach very specific and definite results."



HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Richard Blumenthal, left, and Sam Altman, the chief executive of OpenAI, at a subcommittee hearing on artificial intelligence in May.

Many A.I. leaders have called for regulations and warned about the risks of their technologies to spread disinformation, kill jobs and disrupt elections. Mr. Altman has demonstrated ChatGPT to more than 100 members of Congress and met with many lawmakers privately to discuss regulations. Dario Amodei, the chief executive of the A.I. start-up Anthropic, testified in Congress in July about A.I.'s potential to create bioweapons.

Lawmakers educate themselves on risks and opportunities.

The lawmakers drew the proposals from two hearings held this year with A.I. experts, including Mr. Altman. In one of the hearings, Mr. Altman said he supported the idea of an independent agency to oversee A.I., licensing requirements and safety standards.

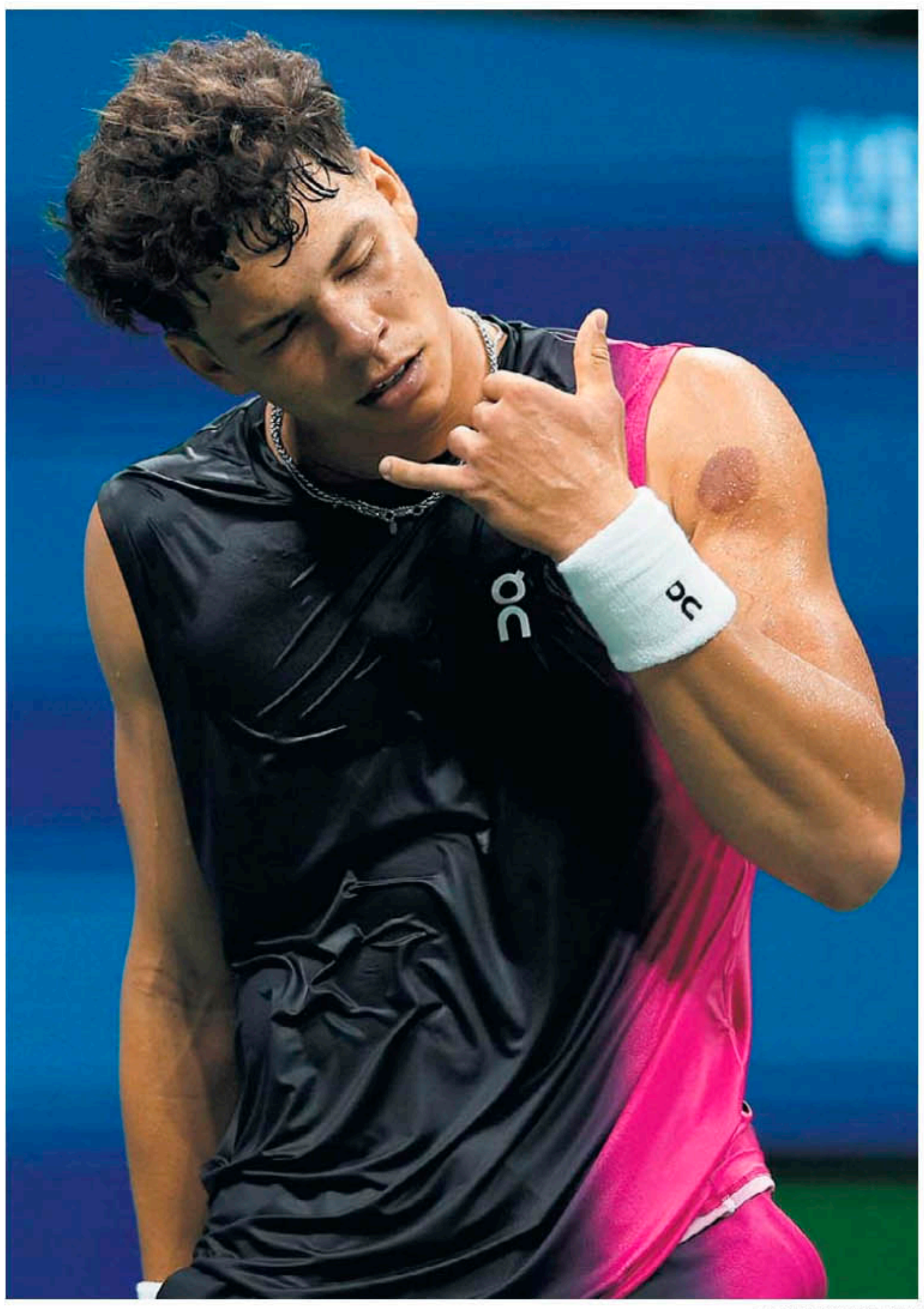
But the framework is set to receive pushback from the tech industry. IBM and Google have argued against the creation of a new oversight office for the technology.

Wednesday's meeting on A.I. regulations led by Mr. Schumer will count Mr. Musk, Mr. Nadella, Mr. Altman, Sundar Pichai of Google and Mark Zuckerberg of Meta among the attendees, as well as leaders of labor unions and civil society groups. It is Mr. Schumer's first "A.I. Insight Forum," part of a series of listening sessions for lawmakers to learn about the technology.

That effort may take many months. Mr. Hawley said he worried that tech executives have had too much weight in private conversations led by Mr. Schumer. "I'm just disappointed that this isn't happening in public, and it's not a real hearing," he said about Mr. Schumer's meeting.

The White House has also met with the chiefs of Microsoft, Google, OpenAI and other firms and has announced that the companies agreed to voluntary safety standards.

TENNIS | U.S. OPEN


ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

SHELTON IS DIALED IN

In Grand Slam Run, More and More on the Line

By SARA ZIEGLER

After winning an all-American matchup at the U.S. Open, Ben Shelton pantomimed answering a phone before slamming it down. What does the gesture mean? We investigate.

Shelton, 20, is in just his first year as a professional, but his wicked serve and oodles of raw talent have made him a rising star on the men's tour. He beat his friend and fellow American Frances Tiafoe on Tuesday night in the quarterfinals, 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (7), 6-2.

For as young as Shelton is, he's a bit of a late bloomer in tennis, having not gotten serious about the game until after quitting football in seventh grade. But before then, one thing he knew well was chatting on the phone — and not a cellphone, but an old-school landline.

"Yeah, so our home phone, when I was growing up in Atlanta, was one like that," he said. "If I wanted to talk to my friends or call their home phone, see if they wanted to go outside and throw a football, that was what I did.

"But for me it's kind of like I'm saying I'm dialed in."

The gesture is also a homage to a friend of Shelton's on the track and field team at the University of Florida, where he played college tennis. The move is the signature of Grant Holloway, a hurdler and sprinter at Florida and an Olympics silver medalist.

Shelton has also done the gesture after a mixed doubles win with Taylor Townsend. To keep going with it in singles, though, he'll need to be more dialed in than ever: In the semifinals, he faces the 23-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic.

GEOFF BURKE/USA TODAY SPORTS VIA REUTERS CON

After beating his friend Tiafoe, Shelton mimed taking a phone call and then hanging up the receiver. He copied the gesture from a college pal.

FIRST ROUND

MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES

MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES

On Aug. 28, Ben Shelton beat Pedro Cachin of Argentina in four sets on Day 1 of the 2023 Open in Queens.

SECOND ROUND

FRANK FRANKLIN II/ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANK FRANKLIN II/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dominic Thiem of Austria, above, withdrew early in the second set of his match with Shelton on Aug. 30.

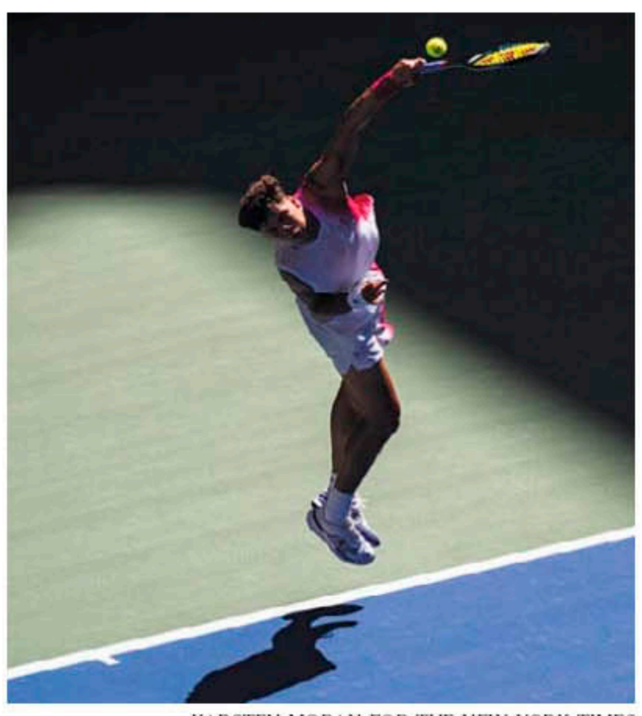
THIRD ROUND

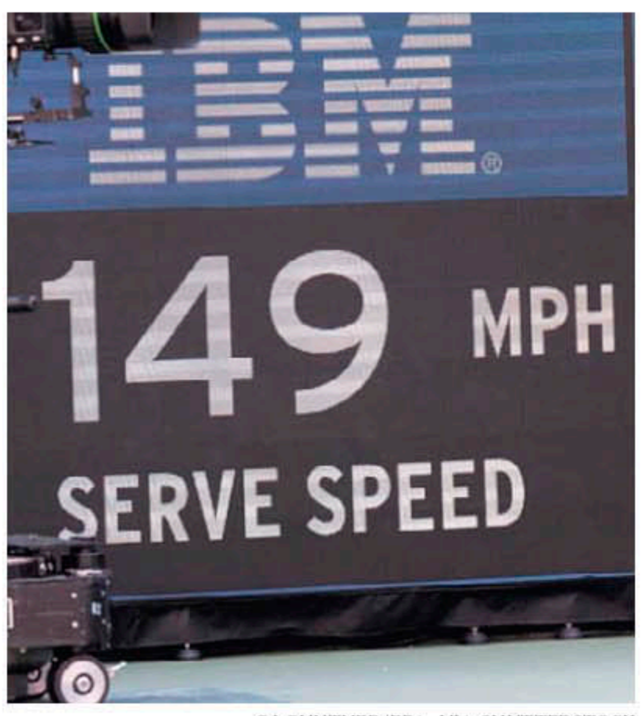
GEOFF BURKE/USA TODAY SPORTS VIA REUTERS CON

PETER FOLEY/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Shelton tossed a towel to a fan after beating Aslan Karatsev of Russia, 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, 6-0, in four sets last Friday.

FOURTH ROUND

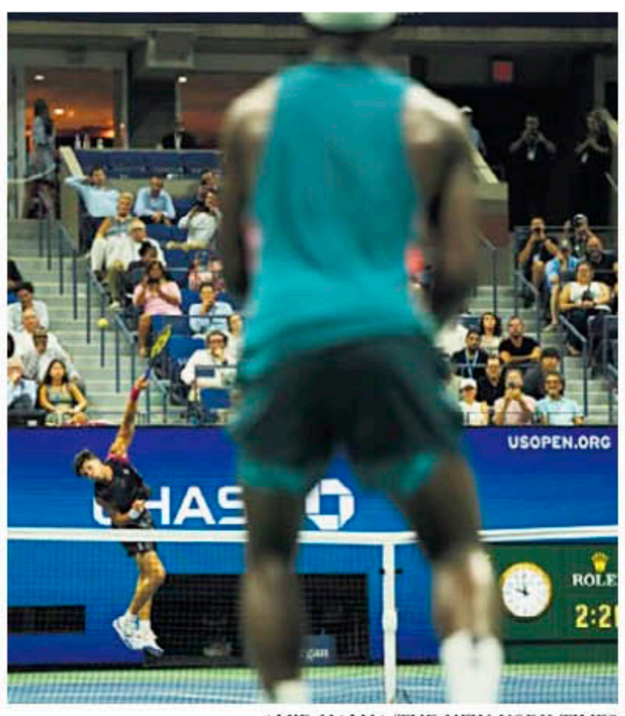

KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



CJ GUNTHER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Shelton serve was scorching in his four-set victory over his fellow American Tommy Paul on Sunday.

QUARTERFINALS



AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Shelton beat Frances Tiafoe of the United States in four sets on Tuesday.

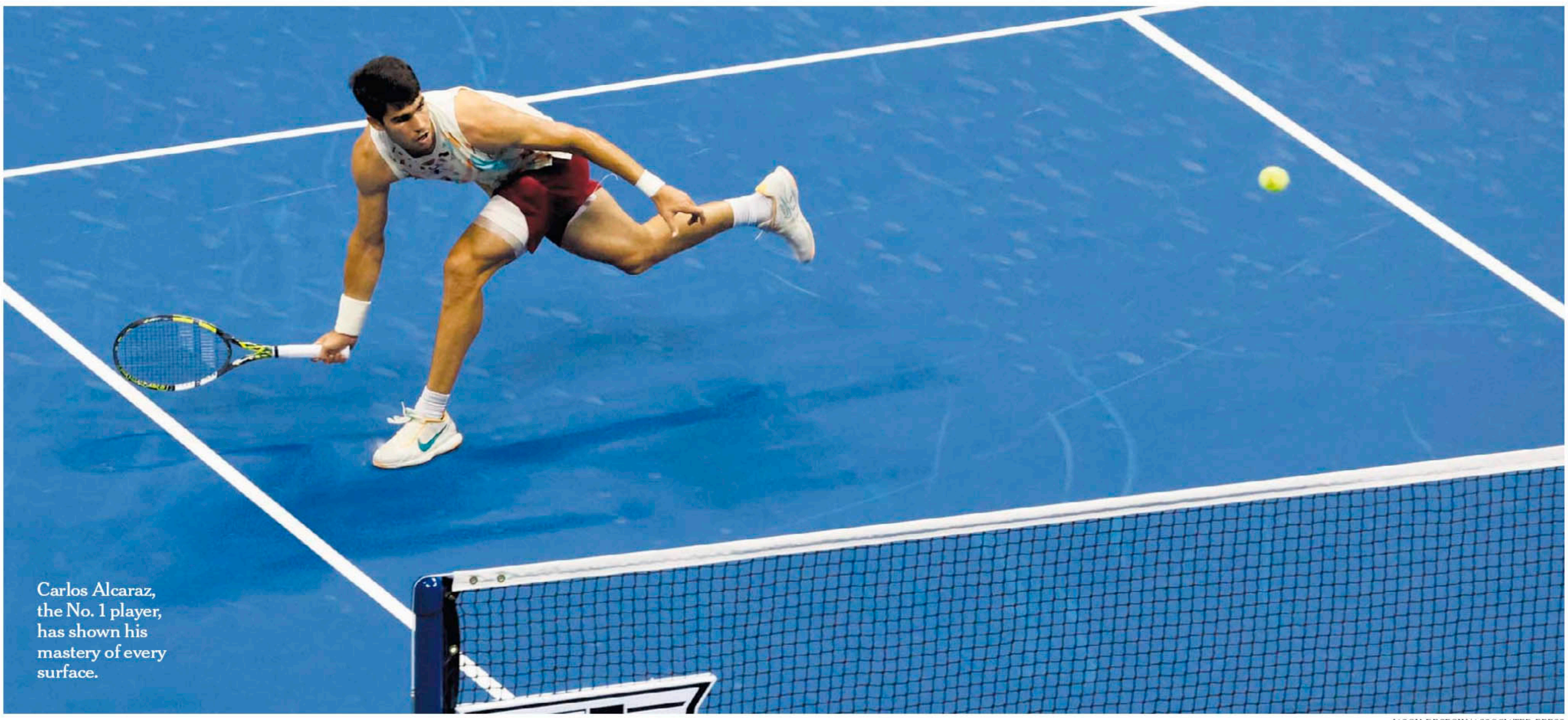
AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The victory over Tiafoe put Shelton into a semifinal with Novak Djokovic.

TENNIS | U.S. OPEN

How the Ball Bounces, in Granular Detail

It's anything but random: Conscious decisions by tournament organizers determine the speed of play.

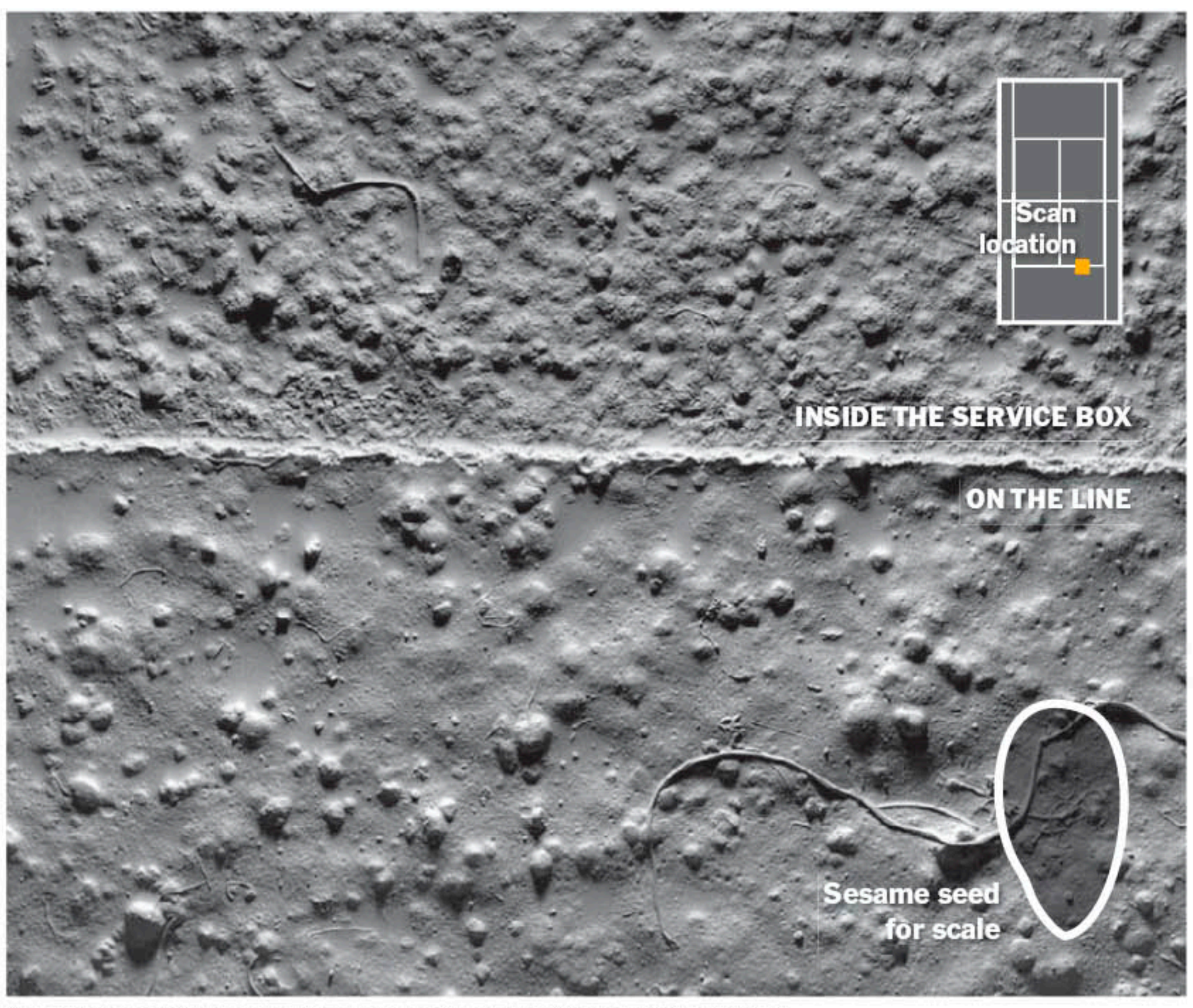


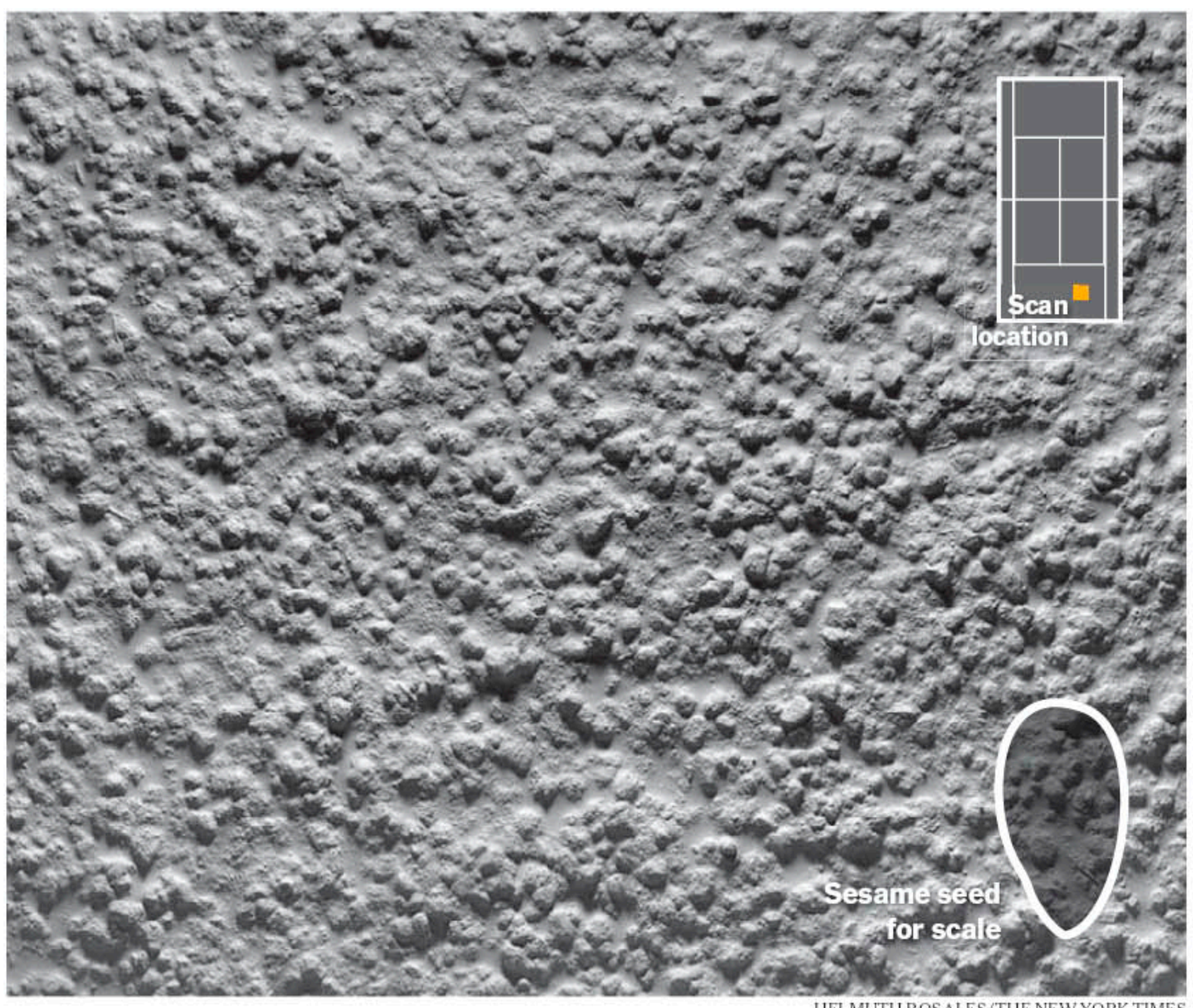
Carlos Alcaraz, the No. 1 player, has shown his mastery of every surface.

JASON DECROW/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Close Look

The tiny granules of sand that make up hardcourt tennis surfaces dictate the speed of the tennis ball after it bounces, affecting the pace of play. These high-resolution scans of the surface in Arthur Ashe Stadium show sand layered into the acrylic paint. Tournament officials have added sand to the white line paint to minimize balls sliding off the line.



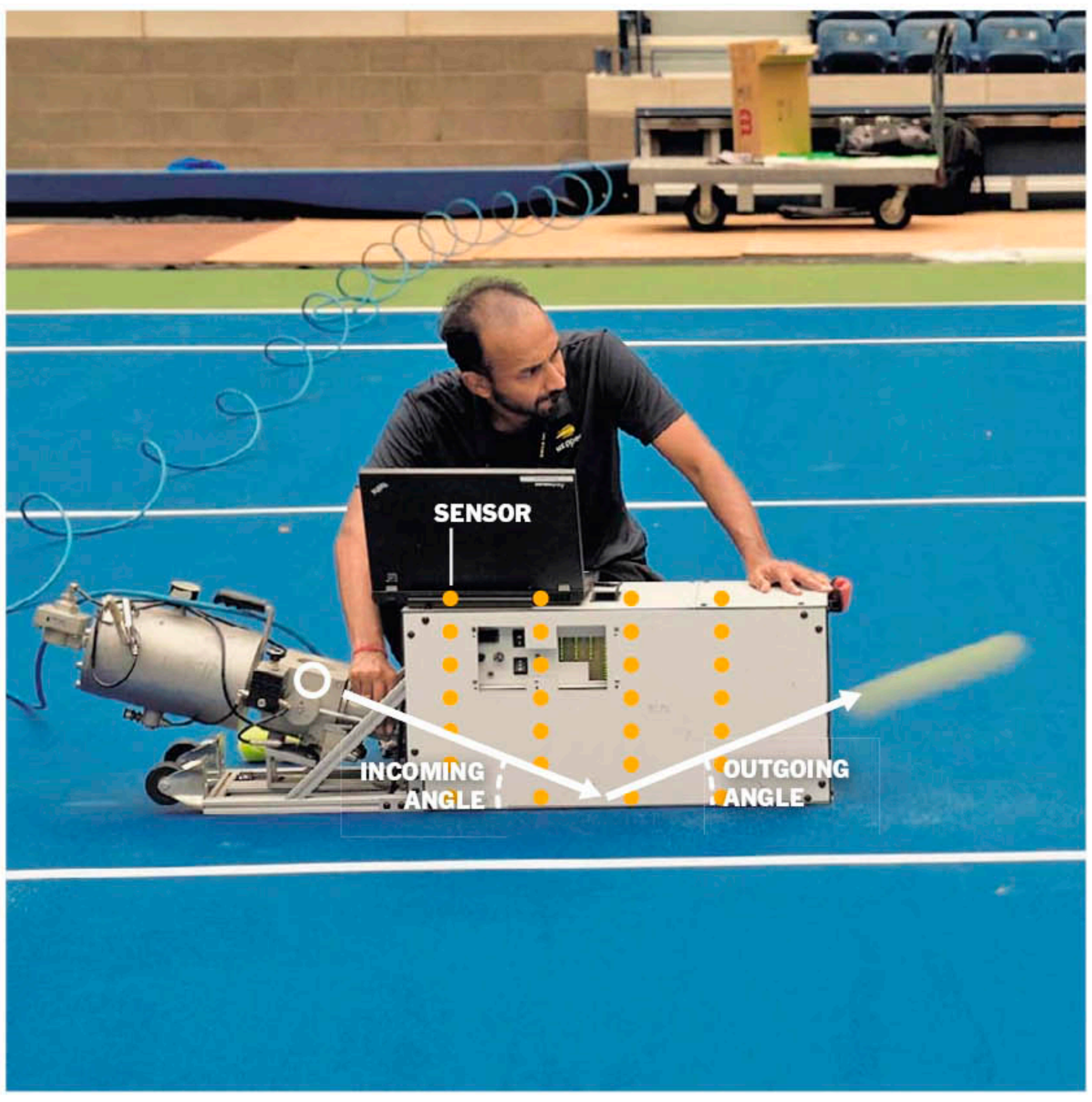


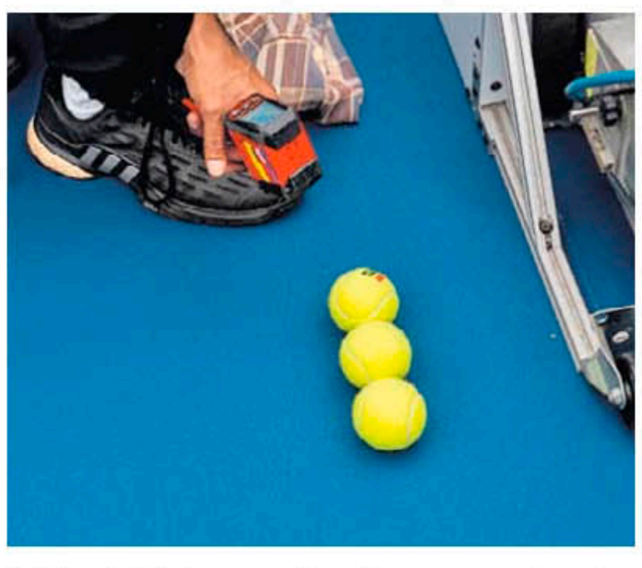
Note: The scans of the court surface were captured with a GelSight Mobile Series 1.

HELMUTH ROSALES/THE NEW YORK TIMES

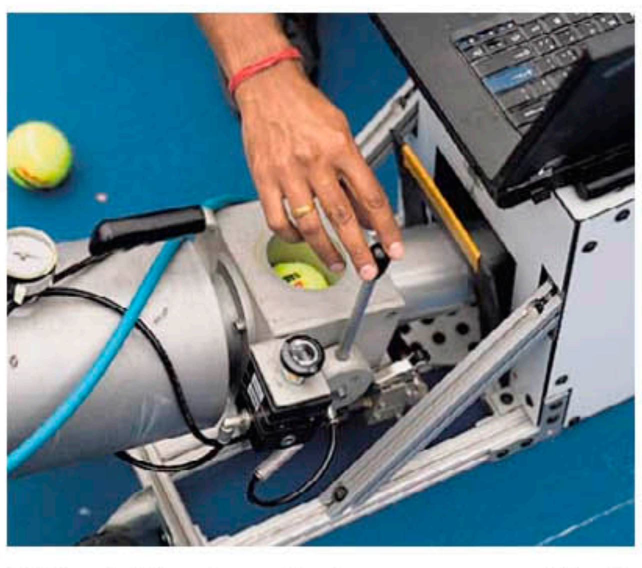
Measuring Pace

Organizers use a device that measures how much resistance the court surface provides as the ball makes contact and how much energy is lost after a bounce. Here's how it works.



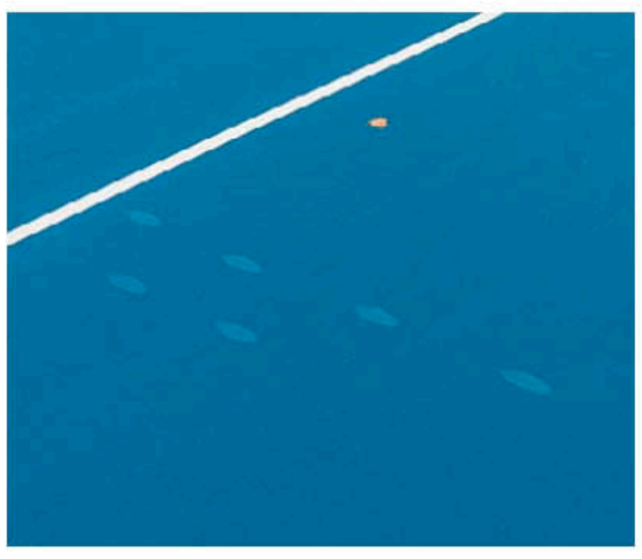


1. The ball's temperature is measured and factored into the pace rating formula.



2. The ball is placed in the cannon and fired into the box, where it bounces off the court.

3. Sensors inside the device calculate the ball's trajectory and pace rating.



4. A pattern of ball impacts are left after testing the pace on key areas of the court.

HELMUTH ROSALES/THE NEW YORK TIMES

By HELMUTH ROSALES and GEOFF MACDONALD

From the seats in Arthur Ashe Stadium, the tennis court below appears smooth and uniform. Even the players who sprint and slide across the blue hardcourt can barely see or sense a characteristic that significantly sets the tone for their matches.

Now take a look at these high-resolution scans of the surface in Ashe, where the biggest stars at the U.S. Open play their most important matches. Notice the microscopic structure of the granules of sand layered into the acrylic paint. The size, shape and density of the sand make up the hardcourt surface and dictate the speed of the ball after it bounces.

Tournament organizers dial in a specific pace for the courts. At the U.S. Open, the surface is categorized as "medium-fast," meaning that fans and players are likely to see fewer long rallies and quicker matches.

"You can order the speed of your court as desired," said Ben Depoorter, a founder of Golden Set Analytics, a tennis analytics company. "There's a conscious decision you can make as the organizer of the event."

To test the U.S. Open's court speed, Suresh Ponnusamy, shown at right, of the United States Tennis Association uses a device that measures friction and restitution. Friction is how much resistance the court surface provides as the ball makes contact. Restitution measures the energy lost to the court after a bounce.

The ball is fired out of a cannon into a box, where it bounces off the court. As it travels through the box, four banks of infrared sensor arrays measure the ball's velocity and angle before and after the bounce. The device feeds its results into software, where the pace rating is calculated.

Of course, players are not always universally happy with the court surface choices made for the tournaments on the professional tours.

At the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, Calif., in March, Daniil Medvedev complained loudly to the chair umpire during his round-of-16 match about how slow the court was playing. "What a shame to call this awful court a hardcourt," Medvedev said.

Medvedev is an elite hardcourt player, with booming serves and forehands. He has won every Masters 1000 hardcourt tournament except Indian Wells at least once, and his best Grand Slam results have come on hardcourts. At the U.S. Open he won the singles title in 2021, and at the Australian Open he reached the finals in 2021 and 2022.

Medvedev was onto something about the courts at Indian Wells. They played slower than the majority of major hardcourt events on the men's tour this year, according to the International Tennis Federation's rating system for the pace of court surfaces.

Professional tennis players must adjust their style of play to courts of different speeds as the season transitions from clay to grass to hardcourts. However, hardcourts vary enough that a medium-slow tournament like Indian Wells feels distinct from a medium-fast court like Miami. After the ball bounces, it will behave differently at Indian Wells than it will at Miami, factoring into the outcome of every match.

Tournament organizers attempt to control the pace of the surface wherever they can. In 2001, Wimbledon went from a mix of ryegrass and creeping red fescue to 100 percent ryegrass, which allowed for firmer courts and cleaner bounces. For the 2023 season, the Miami Open changed to a medium-fast pace from its previous medium, putting it even more out of pace with Indian Wells. At the U.S. Open, tournament officials have added sand to the white line paint to minimize balls sliding off the line.

Regardless of the efforts by tournament organizers to control the pace of play, the best players in the game win consistently no matter how fast the surface is beneath their feet.

Faster surfaces reward offense. Defensive skills and patience are more important on slower courts.

Rafael Nadal, who is dominant on the slower surface of clay, has won a record 14 French Open titles. But, to master hardcourts, he had to develop a more attacking style to feature his lethal forehand.

Court Speeds at Major Tournaments in 2023

TOURNAMENT	COURT SURFACE	PACE RATING
French Open	Clay	Slow (29 or less)
Indian Wells	Hard	Medium-slow (30-34)
Western & Southern Open	Hard	Medium (35-39)
Miami Open	Hard	Medium-fast (40-44)
Australian Open	Hard	Medium-fast (40-44)
U.S. Open	**Hard**	**Medium-fast (40-44)**
Wimbledon	Grass	Fast (45 or more)

Sources: International Tennis Federation; Advanced Polymer Technology; GreenSet

HELMUTH ROSALES/THE NEW YORK TIMES

With the pace of a court having a significant effect on play, the U.S. Open resurfaces and tests each of its 17 courts every year to guarantee consistent pace.

The court surface used at Flushing Meadows is called Laykold, which is made by Advanced Polymer Technology, an international manufacturer of sports surfaces.

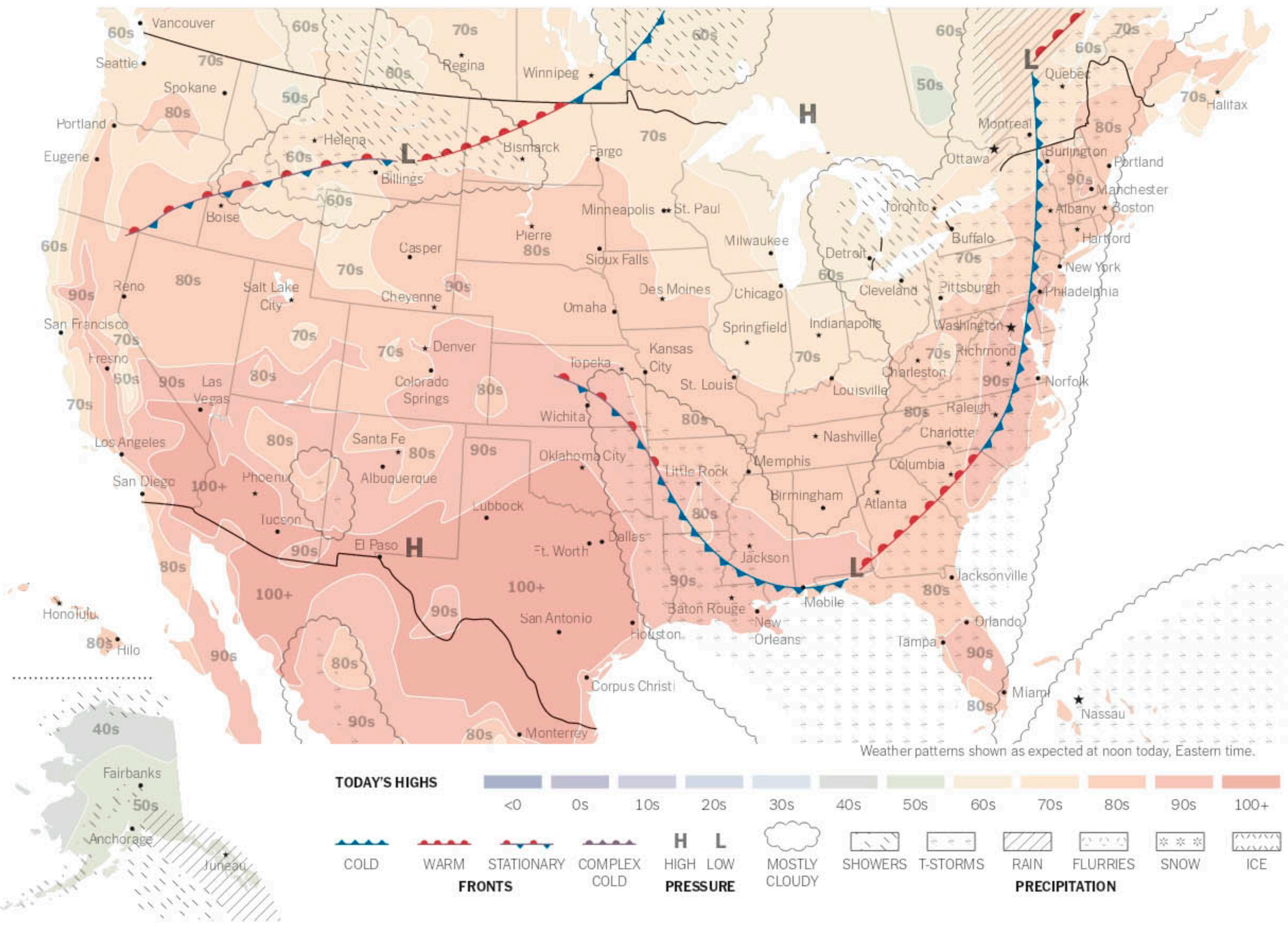
Wesley Baum, Laykold's technical and field support manager, said that the U.S. Open, which has long had a reputation for having relatively brisk courts, "does not accept a deviation in speed" between its courts.

The bounce of a tennis ball generally lasts five milliseconds, an instant that will determine how the ball behaves. Speed, trajectory and spin affect a ball's bounce and movement, but the friction of the hardcourt — based on how smooth or rough the surface is — sets the speed of the court.

The medium-fast court pace at Flushing Meadows favors big servers and players with weapons who can also finish at the net. But an all-court style (think of Roger Federer in his prime), with an ever-changing flow from offense to defense, is an essential strength to master hardcourt tennis. Regardless of how fast the ball ricochets from the court surface after each hit, the game's top players — like Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic — have proven they can find a way to adapt and excel.

Weather Report

Meteorology by **AccuWeather**



Metropolitan Forecast

TODAY ....Humid, heavy thunderstorms

High 87. It will be very warm and humid with low clouds giving way to some sunshine. There will also be showers and thunderstorms, some strong.

TONIGHT ....Showers and thunderstorms

Low 72. As a front slows over the region, clouds will linger and it will stay very humid overnight. Expect more showers and thunderstorms, some with downpours.

TOMORROW ...Showers and thunderstorms

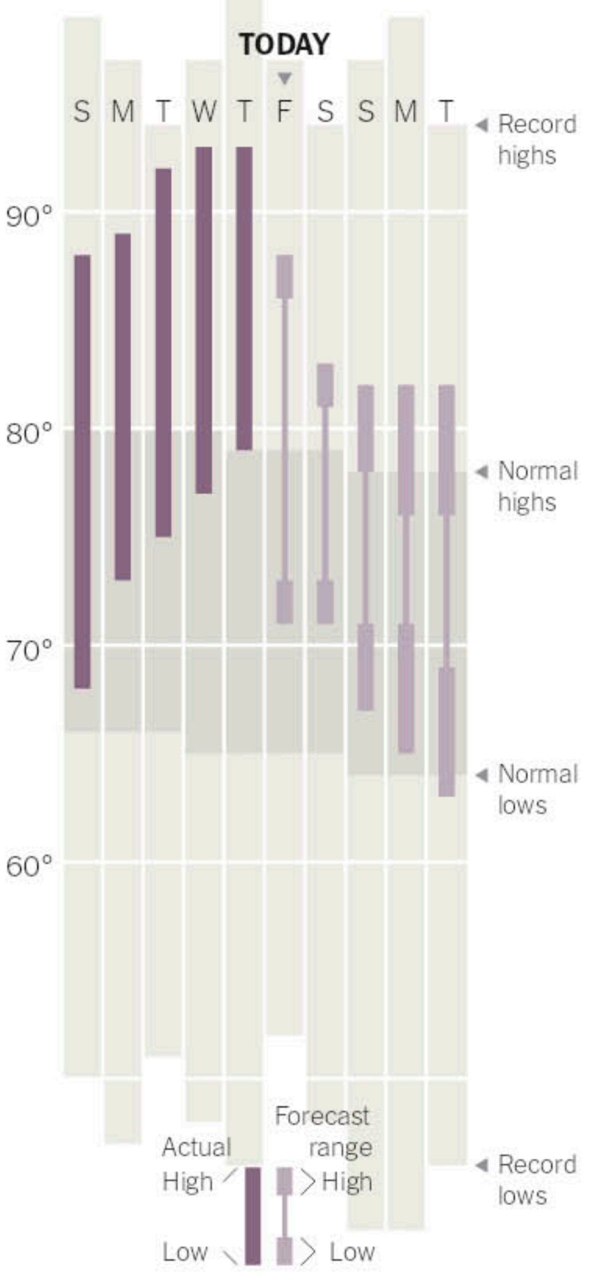
High 82. Clouds may break for a little sunshine, and it will not be as hot as recent days. With the front still nearby, it will remain humid with more heavy showers and thunderstorms on occasion.

SUNDAY ....Heavy thunderstorms

A mostly cloudy sky and humid conditions will continue, with more showers and thunderstorms throughout the day. Some of the storms can bring flooding downpours. High 80.

MONDAY
TUESDAY ....Thunderstorms on Monday

Clouds, along with showers and thunderstorms will persist on Monday. High 79. Dry weather will return on Tuesday, but it will stay mostly cloudy. High 79.



Highlight: Thunderstorms in the Northeast Friday

Thunderstorms are expected to form across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions on Friday, as a front approaching from the northwest merges with warm and humid air to the southeast. Thunderstorms may be severe during the afternoon and evening with the potential for damaging wind gusts. Heavy rainfall is expected, which may result in flash flooding.

National Forecast

A slow-moving front will mark a gradual end to the heat along the Eastern Seaboard today and into this weekend, and the system will unload moisture in the form of showers, gusty thunderstorms and flash flooding.

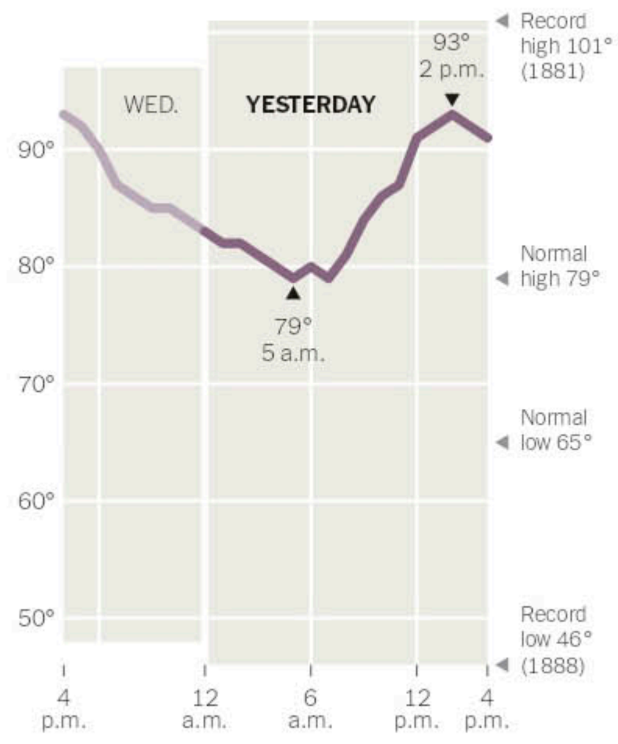
An area of high pressure will allow cooler, less humid air to sprawl over the Midwest as heat holds on and builds in Texas and the southern Plains. More temperate air will linger over the northern Plains. Much of the West will be dry and sunny. A push of cool air will set off showers and heavy thunderstorms from Idaho to Montana and part of Wyoming.

Washington and Oregon will be dry and cool. Much of the interior Southwest will be sunny and hot with only very spotty late-day storms. Meanwhile, Hurricane Lee will glide north of the Caribbean.

Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday.

Temperature



Avg. daily departure from normal this month .... +5.9°

Avg. daily departure from normal this year .... +2.4°

Reservoir levels (New York City water supply)

Yesterday 93%
Est. normal 82%

Precipitation (in inches)

Yesterday 0.00
Record 2.07

For the last 30 days
Actual 5.43
Normal 4.25

For the last 365 days
Actual 48.80
Normal 49.52

LAST 30 DAYS

Air pressure

High .... 29.85 9 a.m.
Low .... 29.80 1 a.m.

Humidity

High .... 71% 7 a.m.
Low .... 43% 2 p.m.

Cooling Degree Days

An index of fuel consumption that tracks how far the day's mean temperature rose above 65

Yesterday.. 21
So far this month.. 99
So far this season (since January 1) 1117
Normal to date for the season 1104

Trends

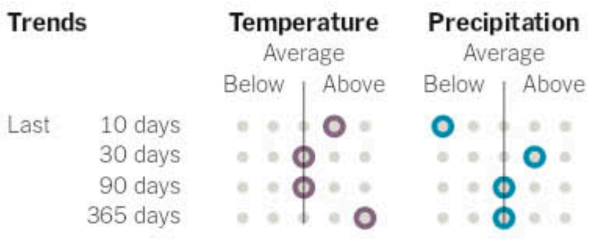


Chart shows how recent temperature and precipitation trends compare with those of the last 30 years.

Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

C	Clouds	S	Sun
F	Fog	Sn	Snow
H	Haze	SS	Snow showers
I	Ice	T	Thunderstorms
PC	Partly cloudy	Tr	Trace
R	Rain	W	Windy
Sh	Showers	–	Not available

N.Y.C. region	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
New York City	93/ 79 0	87/ 72 T	82/ 72 T
Bridgeport	89/ 71 0	84/ 73 T	82/ 73 T
Caldwell	96/ 72 0	89/ 72 T	85/ 71 T
Danbury	93/ 67 0	87/ 73 T	83/ 71 T
Islip	89/ 67 0	84/ 72 T	83/ 71 T
Newark	96/ 76 0	90/ 75 T	85/ 72 T
Trenton	94/ 72 0	90/ 70 T	82/ 68 T
White Plains	93/ 70 0	86/ 72 T	82/ 69 T

United States	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Albany	94/ 67 0.35	84/ 68 T	79/ 68 T
Albuquerque	95/ 65 0	93/ 66 S	93/ 67 S
Anchorage	53/ 43 0.09	53/ 46 C	53/ 46 R
Atlanta	90/ 68 0.04	88/ 69 S	86/ 68 T
Atlantic City	86/ 76 0	84/ 74 C	80/ 72 T
Austin	105/ 77 0	106/ 74 S	104/ 75 S
Baltimore	98/ 71 0	94/ 70 T	86/ 69 T
Baton Rouge	102/ 76 0.05	99/ 72 PC	95/ 66 T
Birmingham	91/ 65 0	86/ 67 S	89/ 67 S
Boise	88/ 58 0	86/ 59 PC	88/ 59 S
Boston	89/ 73 0	87/ 73 PC	84/ 70 T
Buffalo	79/ 66 0.20	75/ 61 T	77/ 62 Sh
Burlington	88/ 68 0.13	82/ 68 T	78/ 67 T
Casper	81/ 44 0	85/ 48 S	77/ 49 PC
Charlotte	93/ 67 0.12	86/ 69 T	81/ 65 T
Chattanooga	88/ 66 0	86/ 69 S	83/ 67 T
Chicago	70/ 61 0	71/ 58 PC	74/ 59 PC
Cincinnati	78/ 64 0.02	74/ 63 PC	78/ 61 PC
Cleveland	78/ 64 0.08	70/ 58 C	72/ 63 C
Colorado Springs	91/ 58 0	87/ 56 S	89/ 55 PC
Columbus	81/ 66 0	75/ 61 PC	78/ 64 PC
Concord, N.H.	94/ 66 0	89/ 69 T	82/ 64 T
Dallas-Ft. Worth	108/ 83 0	107/ 78 S	99/ 77 PC
Denver	90/ 55 0	91/ 58 S	85/ 54 S
Des Moines	78/ 59 0	82/ 56 S	84/ 61 S
Detroit	76/ 61 0.08	69/ 55 C	72/ 59 C
El Paso	103/ 74 0	103/ 75 S	102/ 75 S
Fargo	75/ 54 0	79/ 58 S	70/ 50 T
Hartford	97/ 69 0	87/ 72 T	87/ 70 T
Honolulu	90/ 75 0	89/ 76 PC	89/ 76 Sh
Houston	103/ 80 0	104/ 78 S	100/ 76 T
Indianapolis	76/ 61 0.02	73/ 61 C	75/ 58 PC
Jackson	99/ 66 0	94/ 65 PC	93/ 62 PC
Jacksonville	94/ 71 0	88/ 69 T	87/ 69 T
Kansas City	83/ 59 0	85/ 58 S	85/ 60 S
Key West	89/ 80 0	90/ 80 S	89/ 83 S
Las Vegas	98/ 74 0	100/ 76 S	104/ 79 S
Lexington	80/ 64 0	77/ 63 PC	81/ 63 PC
Little Rock	94/ 70 0	89/ 66 T	88/ 64 S
Los Angeles	84/ 60 0	92/ 69 S	95/ 71 S
Louisville	79/ 68 0.02	79/ 64 PC	82/ 63 PC
Memphis	89/ 65 0	86/ 66 PC	83/ 65 S
Miami	93/ 77 0	92/ 78 S	92/ 78 PC
Milwaukee	67/ 61 0	68/ 58 PC	74/ 59 PC
Mpls.-St. Paul	70/ 54 0	79/ 59 S	80/ 59 Sh
Nashville	82/ 65 0	84/ 65 S	84/ 65 S
New Orleans	97/ 80 0.05	96/ 78 PC	93/ 77 T
Norfolk	94/ 74 0	90/ 74 PC	85/ 72 T
Oklahoma City	101/ 71 0	98/ 69 PC	91/ 67 S
Omaha	82/ 57 0	85/ 58 S	85/ 61 S
Orlando	95/ 76 0	90/ 72 T	91/ 75 T
Philadelphia	96/ 75 0	92/ 73 T	86/ 70 T
Phoenix	108/ 84 0	110/ 85 S	112/ 87 S
Pittsburgh	79/ 64 0.15	78/ 61 T	76/ 63 Sh
Portland, Me.	86/ 67 0	85/ 69 C	79/ 66 T
Portland, Ore.	74/ 56 0	79/ 55 S	83/ 58 S
Providence	93/ 70 0	85/ 70 C	83/ 68 T
Raleigh	97/ 70 0	93/ 71 T	86/ 69 T
Reno	85/ 54 0	85/ 54 S	85/ 54 S
Richmond	100/ 72 0.04	96/ 71 T	87/ 67 T
Rochester	80/ 65 0.53	75/ 64 T	73/ 62 Sh
Sacramento	89/ 59 0	90/ 58 S	91/ 56 S
Salt Lake City	89/ 65 0	91/ 62 S	89/ 63 S
San Antonio	103/ 78 0	104/ 77 S	102/ 79 S
San Diego	77/ 66 0	80/ 68 PC	81/ 66 S
San Francisco	73/ 58 0	74/ 58 PC	74/ 55 S
San Jose	83/ 59 0	84/ 58 S	83/ 58 S
San Juan	90/ 79 0.40	90/ 80 Sh	90/ 80 T
Seattle	70/ 52 0	73/ 52 S	77/ 54 S
Sioux Falls	80/ 56 0	85/ 62 S	83/ 59 T
Spokane	74/ 54 0	75/ 54 PC	78/ 57 S
St. Louis	80/ 62 0	79/ 60 S	80/ 61 S
St. Thomas	90/ 82 0.04	89/ 82 Sh	89/ 81 PC
Syracuse	88/ 68 0.48	80/ 65 T	76/ 64 T
Tampa	92/ 78 0	87/ 75 T	90/ 77 T
Toledo	76/ 63 0.05	71/ 58 C	75/ 56 C
Tucson	104/ 76 0	105/ 75 S	109/ 77 S
Tulsa	95/ 73 0	93/ 68 S	94/ 66 S
Virginia Beach	90/ 74 0	87/ 74 PC	83/ 71 T
Washington	97/ 73 0.04	94/ 71 T	85/ 70 T
Wichita	95/ 66 0	95/ 62 S	94/ 60 S
Wilmington, Del.	94/ 73 0	93/ 71 T	86/ 70 T

Africa	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Algiers	85/ 66 0	84/ 62 S	86/ 66 S
Cairo	109/ 82 0	102/ 78 S	97/ 79 S
Cape Town	63/ 50 0	66/ 50 PC	66/ 51 W
Dakar	86/ 80 0.04	87/ 80 T	89/ 81 PC
Johannesburg	76/ 44 0	81/ 50 PC	84/ 51 S
Nairobi	80/ 59 0.01	71/ 59 R	71/ 57 C
Tunis	86/ 72 0	90/ 70 S	88/ 69 S

Asia/Pacific	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Baghdad	115/ 87 0	108/ 88 PC	106/ 79 PC
Bangkok	91/ 80 0.02	90/ 79 T	94/ 80 T
Beijing	94/ 72 0	84/ 72 Sh	75/ 68 R
Damascus	102/ 68 0	103/ 72 W	100/ 65 S
Hong Kong	86/ 81 0.29	84/ 78 T	83/ 79 Sh
Jakarta	96/ 75 0	93/ 75 PC	92/ 75 PC
Jerusalem	92/ 74 0	97/ 75 S	89/ 68 S
Karachi	94/ 79 0	92/ 80 W	91/ 79 W
Manila	91/ 79 0.10	90/ 78 T	89/ 78 C
Mumbai	88/ 75 0.81	84/ 81 R	87/ 82 Sh
New Delhi	99/ 81 0	93/ 81 PC	90/ 79 T
Riyadh	109/ 86 0	110/ 83 S	110/ 84 S
Seoul	90/ 67 0	88/ 69 S	87/ 71 S
Shanghai	87/ 76 0	88/ 72 PC	87/ 72 PC
Singapore	90/ 75 0.15	86/ 79 T	87/ 79 Sh
Sydney	83/ 51 0	73/ 48 PC	64/ 48 S
Taipei City	86/ 75 0.65	85/ 71 R	90/ 69 S
Tehran	100/ 80 0	98/ 77 S	97/ 76 S
Tokyo	82/ 77 0.07	81/ 78 R	88/ 78 S

Europe	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Amsterdam	84/ 62 0	86/ 64 S	84/ 64 S
Athens	80/ 70 0.13	84/ 73 PC	83/ 70 S
Berlin	86/ 57 0	85/ 57 S	86/ 56 PC
Brussels	84/ 59 0	88/ 64 S	88/ 65 S
Budapest	83/ 52 0	85/ 54 S	86/ 55 S
Copenhagen	73/ 59 0	75/ 62 S	75/ 61 PC
Dublin	75/ 59 0.01	78/ 62 PC	75/ 59 Sh
Edinburgh	69/ 55 0.01	79/ 59 PC	75/ 58 PC
Frankfurt	86/ 60 0	86/ 57 S	87/ 60 S
Geneva	88/ 60 0	88/ 62 S	89/ 62 S
Helsinki	66/ 44 0	71/ 54 C	70/ 56 PC
Istanbul	84/ 73 0.08	86/ 69 W	83/ 69 W
Kyiv	75/ 57 0	74/ 54 S	71/ 49 S
Lisbon	79/ 65 0	78/ 66 Sh	78/ 65 T
London	88/ 66 0	86/ 65 PC	89/ 66 PC
Madrid	86/ 66 0	88/ 66 S	81/ 64 T
Moscow	61/ 46 0	56/ 42 W	64/ 48 C
Nice	84/ 70 0	84/ 72 S	82/ 72 S
Oslo	66/ 54 0	73/ 59 C	72/ 57 PC
Paris	90/ 62 0	94/ 65 S	94/ 66 S
Prague	79/ 53 0	82/ 53 S	83/ 54 S
Rome	87/ 63 0	88/ 64 S	86/ 63 S
St. Petersburg	63/ 45 Tr	67/ 49 C	70/ 52 C
Stockholm	66/ 47 0	70/ 55 PC	73/ 55 C
Vienna	82/ 52 0	82/ 53 S	84/ 55 S
Warsaw	81/ 55 0	80/ 55 S	79/ 56 PC

North America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	91/ 75 0	90/ 76 T	90/ 76 T
Bermuda	84/ 77 0.01	83/ 78 T	82/ 78 PC
Edmonton	63/ 41 0.04	68/ 43 S	69/ 42 S
Guadalajara	78/ 61 0.17	83/ 60 T	85/ 59 S
Havana	91/ 73 0	89/ 72 S	89/ 73 Sh
Kingston	91/ 81 0	93/ 80 T	94/ 80 PC
Martinique	91/ 78 0	89/ 77 Sh	91/ 78 C
Mexico City	75/ 55 0	78/ 55 PC	79/ 56 PC
Monterrey	98/ 75 0	101/ 73 S	100/ 72 S
Montreal	86/ 71 0.04	77/ 60 T	77/ 63 Sh
Nassau	88/ 75 0	87/ 78 T	88/ 78 T
Panama City	84/ 76 0.05	87/ 76 T	85/ 76 T
Quebec City	83/ 66 0.04	75/ 62 T	75/ 58 C
Santo Domingo	92/ 74 0.02	91/ 74 T	89/ 75 R
Toronto	80/ 70 0.31	72/ 55 C	73/ 60 Sh
Vancouver	65/ 53 0	65/ 52 S	68/ 55 PC
Winnipeg	71/ 44 0	74/ 50 S	73/ 49 C

South America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Buenos Aires	59/ 56 0.22	64/ 50 PC	63/ 55 PC
Caracas	92/ 77 0.04	91/ 77 Sh	91/ 77 T
Lima	69/ 64 0	72/ 63 PC	71/ 63 PC
Quito	71/ 42 0	71/ 43 Sh	71/ 44 C
Recife	82/ 75 0.24	83/ 76 R	82/ 75 S
Rio de Janeiro	73/ 68 0.11	81/ 69 PC	84/ 68 PC
Santiago	60/ 43 0	64/ 49 C	59/ 50 C

Recreational Forecast

Sun, Moon and Planets

New	First Quarter	Full	Last Quarter
Sep. 14 9:38 p.m.	Sep. 22	Sep. 29 5:57 a.m.	Oct. 6

Sun	RISE	6:29 a.m.	Moon	S	4:10 p.m.
	SET	7:17 p.m.		R	12:50 a.m.
	NEXT R	6:30 a.m.		S	4:56 p.m.
Jupiter	S	11:39 a.m.	Mars	R	8:22 a.m.
	R	9:44 p.m.		S	8:10 p.m.
Saturn	S	5:31 a.m.	Venus	R	3:58 a.m.
	R	6:50 p.m.		S	5:21 p.m.

Boating

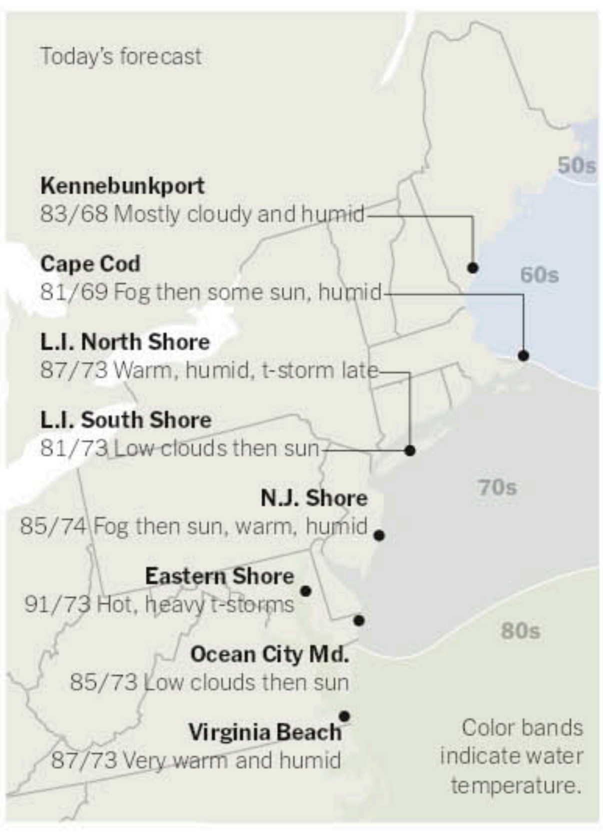
From Montauk Point to Sandy Hook, N.J., out to 20 nautical miles, including Long Island Sound and New York Harbor.

Winds will be out of the south at 10-15 knots, with higher gusts. Waves will be around 1 foot on New York Harbor and Long Island Sound, and 2-3 feet on the ocean. Visibility restricted by late-day storms.

High Tides

Atlantic City	3:05 a.m.	3:34 p.m.
Barnegat Inlet	3:13 a.m.	3:36 p.m.
The Battery	3:50 a.m.	4:12 p.m.
Beach Haven	4:31 a.m.	4:53 p.m.
Bridgeport	6:54 a.m.	7:16 p.m.
City Island	7:34 a.m.	7:57 p.m.
Fire Island Lt.	3:59 a.m.	4:21 p.m.
Montauk Point	4:41 a.m.	5:18 p.m.
Northport	7:08 a.m.	7:31 p.m.
Port Washington	7:33 a.m.	7:56 p.m.
Sandy Hook	3:13 a.m.	3:35 p.m.
Shinnecock Inlet	2:56 a.m.	3:27 p.m.
Stamford	7:06 a.m.	7:26 p.m.
Tarrytown	5:39 a.m.	6:01 p.m.
Willets Point	7:32 a.m.	7:54 p.m.

Beach and Ocean Temperatures



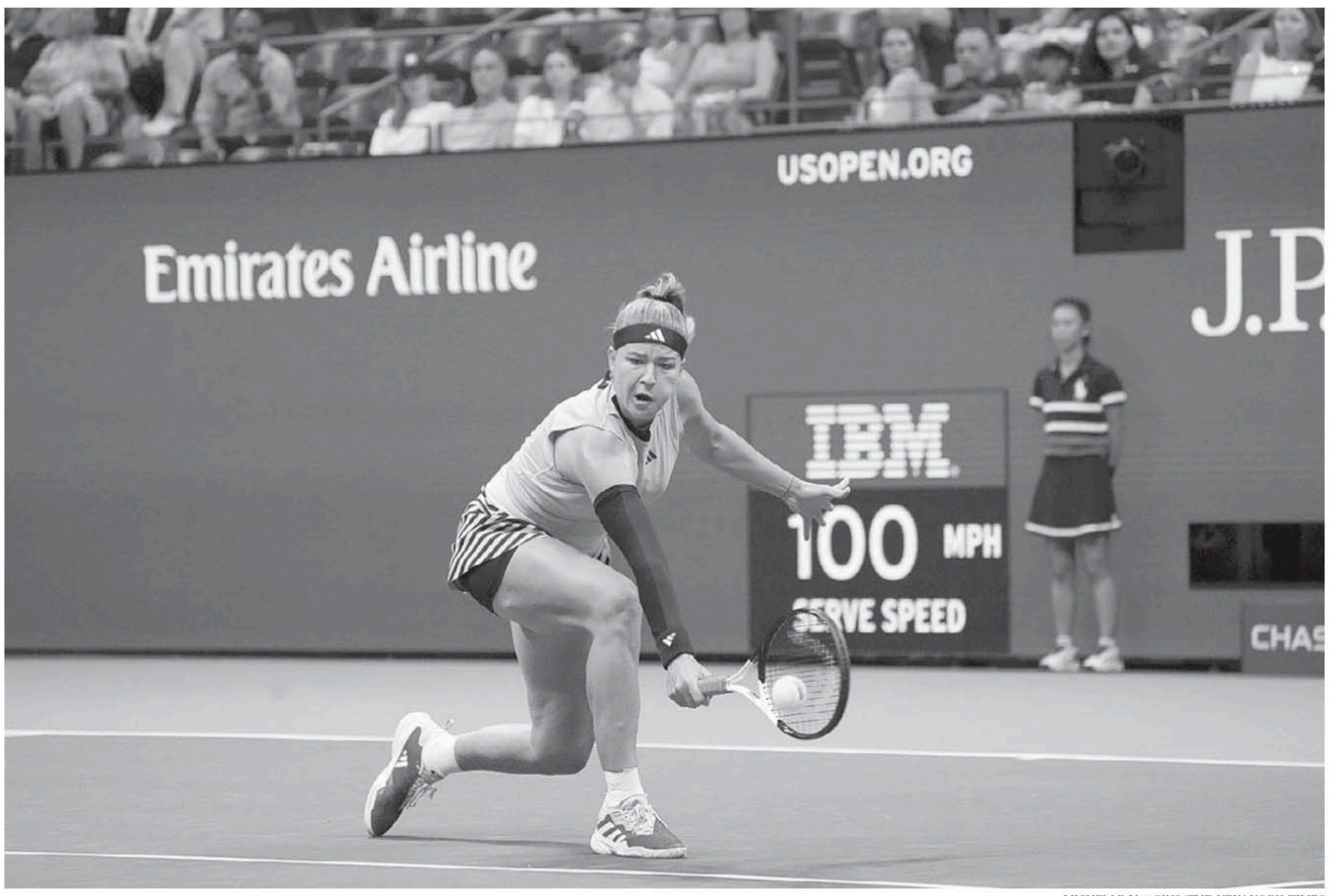
Expect breezy and humid conditions with low clouds giving way to some sunshine for most beaches. Very warm and humid weather will persist ahead of an approaching front, which will increase the chance for gusty afternoon thunderstorms for some Middle Atlantic beaches.

TENNIS | U.S. OPEN

It Took a Long Time, but It Was Finally Gauff's Night

HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Coco Gauff reached her first U.S. Open final by defeating Karolina Muchova, 6-4, 7-5, on a steamy night at Arthur Ashe Stadium.



MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Muchova, who played the match with a black compression sleeve covering her right arm, hitting a backhand against Gauff.

Star Overcomes Distractions And Muchova

By MATTHEW FUTTERMAN

They grow up fast these days, and none faster than Coco Gauff.

In early July, she was a shaky tennis teenager possibly heading into the sport's wilderness, struggling to answer questions about how someone who had once appeared so precocious, so destined for greatness, could still be waiting for her big moment.

In September, she is a U.S. Open finalist, the star attraction of her home Grand Slam tournament and the new face of her sport in America.

Gauff, the 19-year-old prodigy from steamy South Florida, beat Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic, 6-4, 7-5, to reach her first U.S. Open singles final on a warm and heavy Thursday night at Arthur Ashe Stadium. Muchova's all-court game and the strangest of atmospherics tested Gauff as never before, but in the end the night went her way.

Gauff was controlling the match when a climate protest early in the second set caused a nearly 50-minute delay as the New York Police Department and security officials struggled to remove protesters, one of whom had used an adhesive to glue his feet to the concrete in one of the upper levels of the stadium.

At the time of the interruption, Gauff held a lead of 6-4, 1-0 and was playing as well as she needed to take advantage of a seemingly tight Muchova, who played the match with a black compression sleeve covering her right arm from her biceps to her wrist.

During the delay, Gauff and Muchova headed off the court and tried to stay loose in the locker room and the warm-up area. Muchova got a massage and jogged lightly in the hallway outside the locker room. Gauff, seemingly loose, wandered over to a worker from the United States Tennis Association and leaned over to see pictures of the protesters circulating on social media.

The delay took the early juice out of a capacity crowd of nearly 24,000 fans who arrived ready to celebrate a new American tennis queen a year after watching Serena Williams play her final match, signaling the end of an era for American tennis.

Over the past four years, Gauff has evolved into the most likely candidate to fill the void, breaking out at Wimbledon when she was 15 and making the French Open final last year. Since then, her progress stalled, especially on the big stages, and she had yet to move past the quarterfinals of the U.S. Open, the tournament where the spotlight shines brighter on her than anywhere else.

Two months ago, this run, and a championship that is now one match away, didn't seem possible, but Thursday night Gauff showed every reason it suddenly is. She has long had so many of the tools needed to join the sport's elite — a dangerous serve, a tough-as-nails backhand, and the speed and athleticism that combine for the best court coverage in the women's game.

In the past five weeks, she has learned just how to use those tools, stabilizing the shaky forehand that was her nemesis. Against Muchova, she mixed power forehands with looping ones, and she hammered serves while also slicing some into the corners. She cut backhands and charged the net. She took control of points and rallied with Muchova until the Czech star fumbled them away. She got her first match point on a feathered drop shot.

Gauff wobbled midway through the first set, losing three straight games after taking a 5-1 lead as Muchova hit out and pushed Gauff onto her heels. She lost her serve once more as she tried to close out the match at 5-3 in the second.

It would take another three games, one more break of Muchova's serve, five more match points, a nearly endless, lung-busting rally, and one last error from Muchova, and finally the night was hers.

In Second Set, Protesters Cause Bewildering Delay

By JESUS JIMÉNEZ

The U.S. Open semifinal match on Thursday night between Coco Gauff and Karolina Muchova was delayed by more than 40 minutes early in the second set by three environmental protesters in the upper levels of Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The protest confused fans, television commentators and the players themselves, who were trying to understand what the group was protesting and why the match had been delayed so long. When play stopped, Gauff was leading, 6-4, 1-0, and both players left the court.

As stadium security tried to remove the protesters from the stadium, several New York City police officers were seen in the upper level.

"As we witnessed we had environment protesters up in the loge area," the tournament director, Stacey Allaster, told ESPN in an interview near the court late in the delay. "When security got there they found one of the protesters had physically glued himself, his bare feet, to the cement floor."

About 38 minutes into the delay, the U.S. Open said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the New York City Police Department was "in the process of resolving a fan disturbance."

"Play will resume as soon as possible," the U.S. Open said. "Thank you for your patience."

At about 8:50 p.m., about 45 minutes into the delay, the players returned to the court to warm up.

This was not the first instance of an environmental protest at a sporting event. At Wimbledon in July, environmental protesters halted play during a match by throwing confetti onto a grass court.

Nicole Andersen, a nutritionist from Brooklyn, was sitting about 12 rows behind the protesters in Section 114 of the loge level. Initially, Andersen said she thought they were cheering loudly for Gauff.

"Then we realized it was some kind of protest," Andersen said. "Then they would not shut up and stop."

Andersen said that climate issues are "certainly a problem," but added that the protesters at the match may have chosen "not the most effective way to protest for change."

During the delay, Muchova jogged in the hallways outside the locker room. Gauff talked with staff members and checked social media. On the broadcast, Gauff could be heard telling her coaches that security and police were "negotiating" with the protesters, "like it's a hostage situation."

By 8:55 p.m., the players resumed the match, with Muchova to serve down 1-0 in he second set.

The winner between Gauff and Muchova will play the winner of the other semifinal matchup, between Aryna Sabalenka and Madison Keys, who were scheduled to play in Ashe Stadium after the first match.

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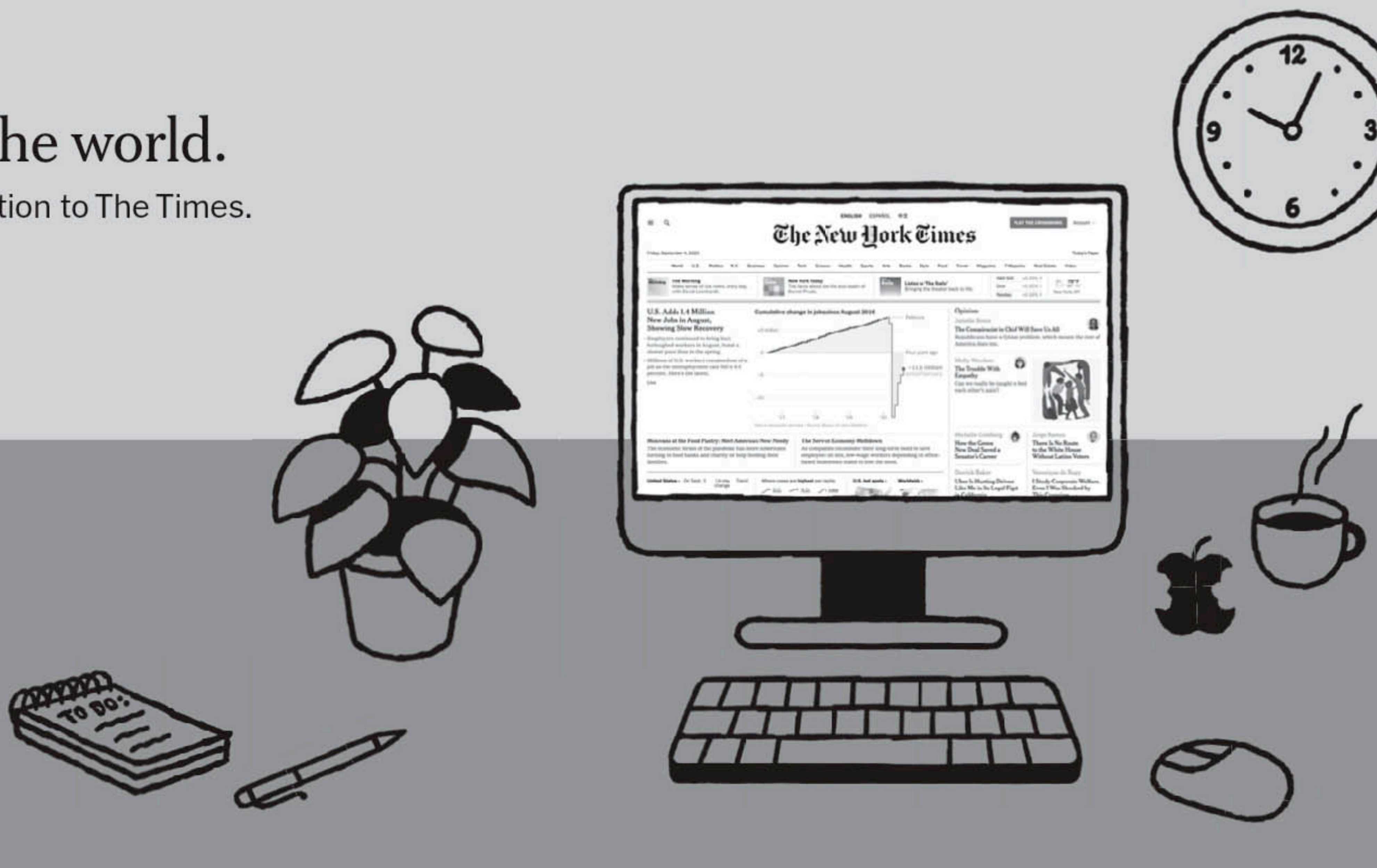


Gary Wright, 80, Dies; 'Dream Weaver' Singer Who Synthesized Pop

By ALEX WILLIAMS

Gary Wright, the spiritually minded singer-songwriter who helped modernize the sound of pop music with his pioneering use of synthesizers while crafting infectious and seemingly inescapable hits of the 1970s, notably "Dream Weaver" and "Love Is Alive," died on Monday at his home in Palos Verdes Estates, Calif. He was 80.

The cause was complications of Parkinson's disease and Lewy body dementia, his son Justin said.

The New Jersey-bred Mr. Wright rose to prominence in the late 1960s after relocating to London and helping to form the bluesy British progressive rock band Spooky Tooth.

He soon befriended George Harrison, with whom he would collaborate frequently over the years, including playing keyboards on his post-Beatles magnum opus, the triple album "All Things Must Pass," released in 1970.

Their long friendship would have a lasting impact on both Mr. Wright's life and his music. Mr. Harrison introduced him to Eastern mysticism, giving him a copy of "Autobiography of a Yogi," by Paramahansa Yogananda, who helped popularize yoga and meditation in the United States, and Mr. Harrison traveled with him to India.

"That was his life path after that," Justin Wright said in a phone interview. "Deep down inside of him, he was searching for something, and this was the answer for him."

His spiritual awakening helped spawn "Dream Weaver," a track from his 1975 album, "The Dream Weaver," which hit No. 7 on the Billboard album chart and rocketed Mr. Wright to fame. The song was inspired by the yogi's poem "God, God, God," which includes the line "My mind weaves dreams."

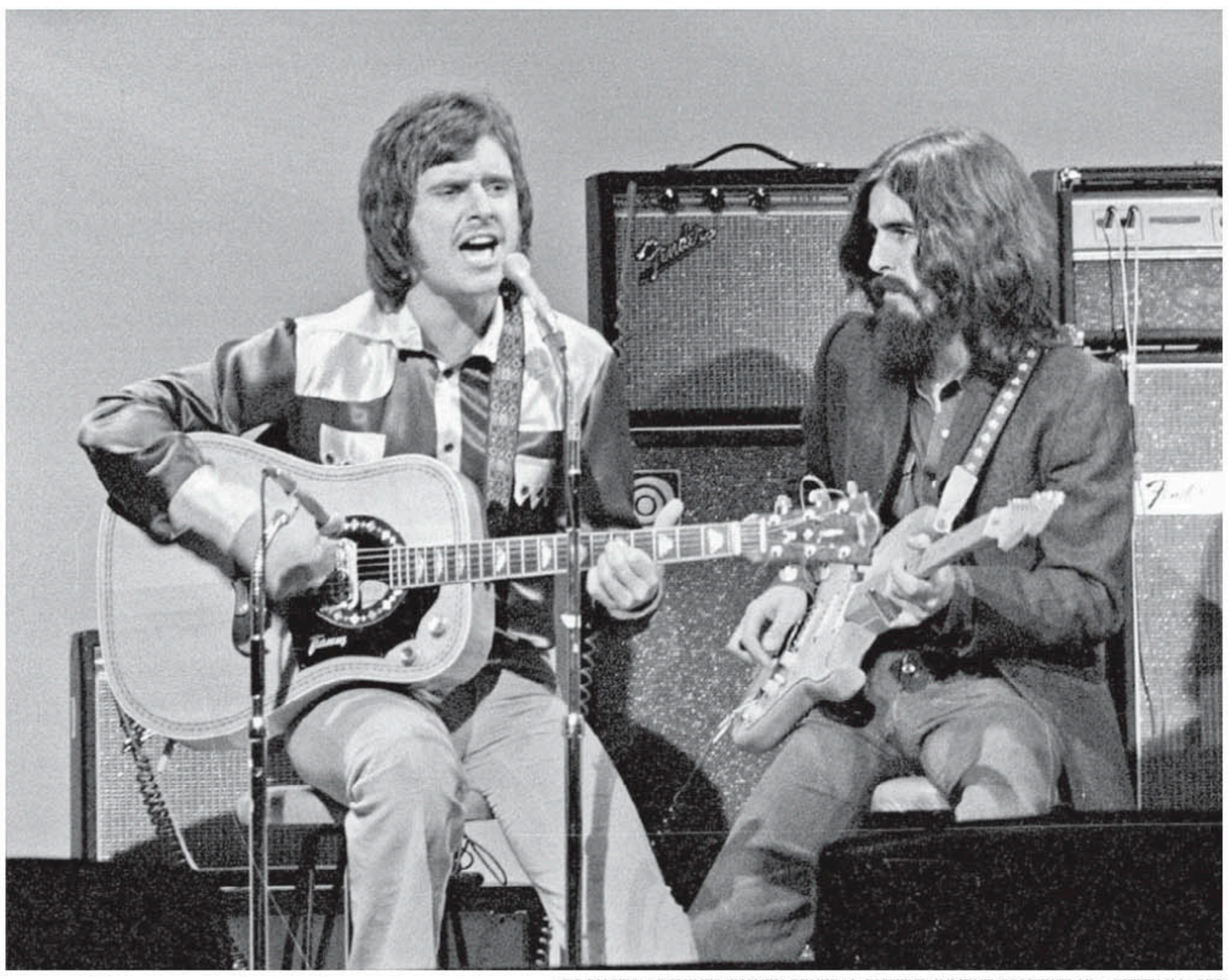
Mr. Wright begins the song with the lyrics "I've just closed my eyes again/Climbed aboard the dream weaver train/Driver take away my worries of today/And leave tomorrow behind."

"Dream Weaver," swept along by a wave of lush electronica that bordered on the interstellar, soared to No. 2 on the Billboard single chart in March 1976. The song became a soft-rock touchstone, appearing in such movies as "Wayne's World" (1992) and "The People vs. Larry Flynt" (1996), as well as on a 2010 episode (titled "Dream On") of the musical comedy-drama TV series "Glee."

It was not the only smash hit from that album. That July, "Love Is Alive," like "Dream Weaver," rose to No. 2, conjuring the languid sexuality of the water bed era. Mr. Wright performed at stadium shows on the same bill as heavyweights like Peter Frampton and Yes, standing out among the guitar gods with his strap-on keyboard known as a keytar.

While his biggest hits became emblematic sounds of the 1970s, Mr. Wright had taken an unconventional musical approach on the album "The Dream Weaver." He relied almost entirely on keyboard instruments, including a Minimoog synthesizer, as opposed to guitars, foreshadowing the synth-pop boom of the early '80s.

"The theme of having only keyboards, drums, voices — and no guitars — came accidentally," Mr. Wright said in a 2010 interview with Musoscribe, a music website. When he went back and listened to the demos he had recorded, he said, "I thought, 'Wow. This sounds good. It doesn't really need guitars.'"



ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES/DISNEY GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Gary Wright, left, with George Harrison, the former Beatle, on "The Dick Cavett Show" in 1971.

Gary Malcolm Wright was born on April 26, 1943, in Cresskill, in northeast New Jersey. He was the middle of three children of Lou and Anne (Belvedere) Wright. His father was a structural engineer.

His mother helped instill in Gary an interest in music and acting, driving him to piano lessons and eventually to auditions. Their efforts paid off when he made an appearance on the seminal science fiction TV series "Captain Video and His Video Rangers" and later won a role in the 1954 Broadway musical "Fanny," starring Florence Henderson.

"I originally came into the play as an understudy to the main role, and then I picked up the main child role," Mr. Wright said in a 2014 interview with Smashing Interviews magazine. "I was only 11 and 12 during those years. It was an amazing experience to act and sing every night before sold-out audiences and sing with a full orchestral band."

He performed at stadium shows on the same bill as Yes and Peter Frampton.

Within a few years, he abandoned the stage and screen "to be a normal kind of person in school, playing sports and Little League Baseball and that kind of thing," he told Smashing Interviews. While attending Tenafly High School, he played in various rock groups, including a duo called Gary and Billy with his school friend Bill Markle. Their single "Working After School" was played on the Dick Clark television show "American Bandstand."

After high school, Mr. Wright attended William & Mary in Virginia for a year before transferring to New York University, where he switched his focus to medicine. After graduating in 1965, he briefly enrolled in medical school before moving to Berlin to study psychology.

Losing interest in a life in clinical practice, he went back to music, helping to form a band that built a following in Europe; at one point it opened for the rock group Traffic in Oslo. There he caught the attention of Chris Blackwell, the founder of Island Records. Mr. Blackwell summoned him to England to join a band called Art, which evolved into Spooky Tooth.

RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

"The theme of having only keyboards, drums, voices — and no guitars — came accidentally," Mr. Wright said.

Spooky Tooth temporarily disbanded in 1970, and soon after that Mr. Wright released two solo albums. One of them, "Footprint," featured Mr. Harrison on guitar on the track "Two Faced Man," which the two performed with Mr. Wright's band Wonderwheel on "The Dick Cavett Show" in 1971.

In addition to his son Justin, Mr. Wright is survived by his wife, Rose (Anthony) Wright; another son, Dorian; a sister, Lorna Lee; and two grandchildren. His marriages to Christina Uppstrom, the mother of his sons, and Dori Accordino ended in divorce.

Along with his work with Mr. Harrison, Mr. Wright was a session keyboardist for musicians like Harry Nilsson, B.B. King and Jerry Lee Lewis, and he continued to record solo albums.

In the Musoscribe interview, he discussed his 2010 release, "Connected," and the album's hook-laden opening track, "Satisfied," in terms that could have applied to "Dream Weaver."

"The word 'hook' means drawing people into something," he said. "When I write songs, I always try to make them that way — catchy — so that people will remember them. They'll be more embedded in people's consciousness."

Sarah Wunsch, 75, Dogged Defender Of Civil Liberties for Nearly 30 Years

By SAM ROBERTS

Sarah Wunsch, a civil liberties lawyer who championed citizen protections on issues of race, gender and free speech and helped persuade New York's highest court to declare that men could be prosecuted for raping their wives, died on Aug. 17 at her home in Brookline, Mass. She was 75.

The cause was complications of a stroke she sustained three years ago, her spouse, Christine Ernst, said.

As deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts for almost three decades, Ms. Wunsch brought innovative challenges before the courts, aimed at safeguarding a wide range of public behavior, including panhandling for small amounts of change, tattooing, wearing certain hairstyles in school and videotaping on-duty police activity.

She even ghostwrote a letter to the state legislature on behalf of her bull terrier, opposing a bill that would have forced owners to muzzle and chain some dog breeds while in public.

When the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, ruled in 1984 that married men may be prosecuted for raping their wives, it marked the first time the highest court in any state had invalidated an explicit statutory exemption for marital rape.

KATHLEEN DOOHER

Sarah Wunsch in 2012.

Before the ruling, a husband in New York could be convicted of raping his wife only if the couple were legally separated or living apart by court order. With the court's unanimous decision, New York joined 17 other states that had abolished the marital rape exemption in some or all cases through legislative action or by a top court's reversal of an earlier decision.

"A marriage license should not be viewed as a license for a husband to forcibly rape his wife with impunity," Sol Wachtler, an associate judge who would later be named the appeals court's chief judge, wrote. "A married woman has the same right to control her own body as does an unmarried woman."

Ms. Wunsch, who had filed a supporting brief for the Center for Constitutional Rights on behalf of 26 women's organizations seeking to abolish the exemption, called the ruling "an important step in the continuing effort to end violence against women."

In 1983, as a lawyer for the constitutional rights center, she helped persuade a federal judge to grant an injunction blocking regulations that required federally subsidized clinics to tell parents when minors received prescription contraceptives.

Her advocacy also led to a ruling in Massachusetts that protected the destitute by establishing that peaceful requests for spare change or other kinds of help were protected forms of free speech.

"If we ever end up a society where you can't ask for help, we're in deep trouble," The Associated Press quoted Ms. Wunsch as saying after the ruling.

In another Massachusetts case, she and her colleagues at the civil liberties union successfully argued that tattoo art was protected by the First Amendment and that a state ban on tattooing was unconstitutional.

MARILYN HUMPHRIES

Ms. Wunsch and her spouse, Christine Ernst, in Boston in 2013.

She also challenged discrimination against hairstyles at a local school, racial profiling at Boston Logan International Airport and the infringement of the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Sarah Rose Wunsch was born on Nov. 18, 1947, in Brooklyn to Harry and Helen (Gellis) Wunsch. Her mother was a librarian, her father a mechanical engineer.

Raised in Westport, Conn., she graduated from Cornell University in 1969, worked as a librarian and taught social studies to eighth graders. Her early commitment to advocacy, honed at Cornell, eventually attracted her to the legal profession. She earned a degree from Rutgers Law School in New Jersey.

Before joining the civil liberties union, she worked as a lawyer for the Union of Electrical, Radio and Mechanical Workers and for the constitutional rights center in New York. She was also director of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission in Massachusetts.

She retired in 2018.

In addition to Ms. Ernst, she is survived by her brothers, David, Carl, James and Gerald Wunsch.

In 1997, when the state legislature was considering whether to propose a bill mandating that owners muzzle and chain certain breeds of dog in public, Ms. Wunsch submitted testimony in the name of her pet bull terrier, Czonka (pronounced ZON-ka), denouncing the proposal as "the equivalent of racism in the dog world."

She fought for free speech, access to birth control and gender equality.

"I am a bull terrier, and I am proud of it," the prepared testimony stated. "I am also a pacifist; I run home when I hear another dog growl, even when I'm not the target of the growl. So, I really resent it when legislators start making prejudiced statements about an entire breed. Even my friends the pit bulls can be perfectly nice dogs. It's not the breed. The problem lies with bad human owners and individual dogs."

Carol Rose, the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, said in an email: "Czonka's testimony won the day. Massachusetts never enacted a statewide muzzle requirement for bulldog breeds. Certain municipalities did, but Gov. Deval Patrick signed a law prohibiting specific breed-based laws in 2012."

Living in Brookline, a neighborhood not far from Fenway Park, Ms. Wunsch was a Boston baseball fan. Still, there were times when her loyalty was tested, and she couldn't help but cheer for the underdog.

"If the Red Sox were clobbering the other team," Ms. Ernst said, "she'd start rooting for that team because she felt badly for them."

Deaths

Ader, Richard
Bernstein, Barbara
Brainerd, Anne
Davidson, Joan
Mintz, Gilda
Scholnick, Eric
Zahn, Elizabeth

ADER—Richard.

Richard Ader of New York died on September 1, 2023. Born in 1942 to Etta and Nathan Ader, his remarkable life was marked by a relentless pursuit of excellence both professionally and personally. Mr. Ader grew up in Manhattan and attended the McBurney School. Following his graduation from the University of Vermont (UVM) in 1963, he dedicated two years to the Army National Guard. Ader then began his business career at Integrated Resources. In 1989, he founded U.S. Realty Advisors where he served as Chairman. Renowned as a visionary pioneer in the field of corporate sale leaseback transactions, Mr. Ader's expertise in the subject transformed him into a titan of the industry. His peers acknowledged his outstanding contributions by electing him as Net Lease Executive of the Year in 2011. Mr. Ader was also selected as a Legend and Icon, respectively, by Commercial Property News and Real Estate Forum in 2012. Beyond his remarkable professional achievements, Mr. Ader excelled in athletics. As a formidable presence on the UVM basketball court, he earned All-Yankee Conference and First Team All-State accolades during his undergraduate years. In recognition of his sporting prowess, UVM inducted him into their Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017. Displaying his versatility, he also showcased his skills as a baseball starter on the Army's initial team at Fort Knox. Throughout his life, Mr. Ader held a steadfast commitment to UVM close to his heart. As the Chairman of the Advisory Board for the UVM College of Arts and Sciences, as well as a member of the UVM Foundation board, he actively contributed to the university's growth and development. Upon discovering his passion for tennis, Mr. Ader became wholeheartedly dedicated to the sport. He had the privilege of representing the United States tennis team at the Maccabiah Games in Israel where he medaled and served as a Co-captain for 16 years. Furthermore Mr. Ader diligently sought to create opportunities for others to partake in the sport he loved. As a trustee of the U.S. Tennis Association Foundation, he championed the National Junior Tennis and Learning network (NJTL), which served thousands of underprivileged youth and supported 300 nonprofit organizations. Mr. Ader founded the Bennington Tennis Center and established the local chapter of the in the city. He received the NJTL: Founder's Service Award in 2022. Richard's most cherished achievement was his 58-year marriage to Pamela Bennett, the love of his life and best friend. He wrote about his life and how to overcome obstacles in his book, "How to Rally," published in 2021. Mr. Ader is survived by his wife Pamela, his daughter Jennifer Ader her husband Aaron and son Colt, his daughter-in-law Julie and her children Sophia, Jack, Asher and Ava, his son Jason, his sister Sylvia Ader Kirschner, and their extended family. A memorial service will be held on September 12, 2023 at 1pm at Sutton Place Synagogue in Manhattan. The family kindly requests any donations to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation in honor of Mr. Ader's enduring commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of others.

BERNSTEIN—Barbara Rose Ettinger,
passed away on August 10, 2023 at the age of 92. She grew up in Brooklyn and Flushing, and moved to Southern California in 1968. Barbara, a landscape designer and clinical psychologist, was a pistol, a delight to her late husband of 64 years, Arthur, a wonderful mother to her children Diane and Jeff, and a stupendous grandmother to her grandchildren Hilary and Sam. Per her wishes her body was donated to the medical school at UCLA. Jeff and Diane may be contacted at
cikgujeff@gmail.com;
dianeculvercity@gmail.com.

BRAINERD—Anne Eddison.
August 19, 1930 - September 3, 2023. Formerly of New York, then Cambridge, MA. Vassar '51, Harvard Graduate School of Design. Landscape Architect, outdoorswoman, rebel. Survived by Lisa (Robert), Brooks, Charles (Amanda), and seven grandchildren. Burial at sea.

DAVIDSON—Joan Kaplan.
World Monuments Fund (WMF) mourns the passing of Joan K. Davidson, an unparalleled champion of cultural heritage preservation. A visionary leader and philanthropist, Joan played a key role in safeguarding and raising awareness of some of the world's most treasured places. She supported numerous WMF conservation projects and publications through the J.M. Kaplan Fund and the Furthermore grants in publishing program. Her work will have an enduring impact for generations to come. All of us at WMF honor her memory.

MINTZ—Gilda Yolles,
died peacefully from natural causes at the age of 88 on September 1, 2023, surrounded by her sons Stephen and Louis. If you were in New York's media or public relations industry from the 1960s through the 1990s, you knew Gilda - a professional trailblazer for women in the spirit of feminine icon Mary Tyler Moore. She was also a successful parent and recognized civic leader during her long residence in Teaneck, NJ, where she raised her family. Born on May 2, 1935, Gilda lived her entire life in the Greater New York area and earned an undergraduate degree from Hunter College in 1956. Before the age of 30, she travelled independently for months through Europe (virtually unheard of for a single woman at the time), became a member of John F. Kennedy's entourage during his successful Presidential campaign in 1960 and was awarded runner-up in the Miss Fire Island Beauty Pageant. Her family emigrated from modern-day Ukraine in 1920 when the Stretiner Rebbe - her maternal grandfather and one of the most distinguished and revered Hassidic rebbes of that time - arrived on the Lower East Side of Manhattan with the support of followers who first arrived in America around World War I. Gilda's mother, Sarah Pearl Langner, was the oldest of the Rebbe's five daughters and had three children with her husband, Cantor Naftali Yolles, but tragically passed away when Gilda was only two years old. Gilda's father, a renown tenor, continued to provide cantorial services to synagogues nationally while Gilda and her older sister Dorothy were placed in loving foster care with the family of Max and Mary Heyman in Far Rockaway, NY. Gilda graduated from Far Rockaway High School in 1952 at the age of 17. After college and her time in Europe, Gilda's professional career took shape at Ruder & Finn, a leading global public relations agency at the time. Over more than 20 years with the firm, she rose to the position of Senior Vice President and led highly successful engagements with many blue- chip clients including Lenox China. In 1978, a campaign she conceived and led for the Wallcovering Information Bureau received the Public Relations Society of America's Silver Anvil Award, recognized as the most prestigious national honor for public relations programs. Other clients in her illustrious career included Orrefors Crystal, The National D-Day Museum and CBS News with Bill Moyers. Her colleagues and clients consistently praised her intelligence, savvy and boundless energy. Outside the office Gilda enjoyed sharing her many passions with friends and family including her love of world travel, chocolate ice cream, U.S. Open Tennis and summer days on the beach and boardwalk. She was also an avid baseball fan who grew up going to Dodgers games at Ebbets Field and loved seeing Sandy Koufax on the mound. From 1963 to 1974, Gilda was married to David Mintz and they had two sons together, Louis and Stephen. With unwavering love, it was family and friends that Gilda most cherished - and watching her grandchildren grow and thrive drove her seemingly endless grit and determination through final years filled with chronic pain and numerous medical challenges. Predeceased by her older brother Harry Yolles and older sister Dorothy Mathis, she leaves behind her children, Louis Mintz (Beverly Crilly), Stephen Mintz (Jennifer Elliott) and five grandchildren: Silas, Delaney, Norah, Ian and Leo. In memory of Gilda, the family requests that contributions be made in her honor to the National Organization of Women. May Gilda's memory be a blessing and may her family find comfort among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and around the world.

Memorialize and celebrate a loved one in the pages of The New York Times.
advertising.nytimes.com
1-800-458-5522
The New York Times
NYTIMES.COM

SCHOLNICK—Eric.
Passed away September 6th, 2023. Beloved husband of Dr. Ellen Ginsberg. Loving father of Sara Scholnick, Max Scholnick, Michael Graziano and Dr. Sarah Ruthen (Dr. Zev Leopold). Devoted son to Judge Leonard Scholnick and the late Stephanie Scholnick. Cherished twin brother of Elisa (Daniel) Ansell. Services 9:30am Sunday, September 10th at Sherman's Flatbush Memorial Chapel, 1283 Coney Island Avenue Brooklyn, NY.

ZAHN—Elizabeth Mae.

Elizabeth Mae (Betty) Zahn passed away peacefully on September 5, 2023 in Rye, New York, four months shy of her 100th birthday. Betty was a long-time resident of Naperville, Illinois, before she moved to the New York City area twenty years ago. Her beloved husband Norman predeceased her, passing in 1986. Betty and Norman raised their four children in Naperville. Betty was born in Aliquippa, PA. Her educational achievements included a BA in Liberal Arts from Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA and a Master of Language Arts from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She also studied at the University of Mexico in Mexico City while in graduate school. Her career as an educator included being the youngest professor ever at Geneva College. Betty was a lifelong lover of the arts. She received a Fine Arts Degree from the Chicago Art Institute and her watercolors were featured in numerous juried shows. She was an integral part of the team that brought the Naperville Riverwalk and its showpiece Landforms sculpture into being. Her faith, strength, and indomitable will sustained her through two sieges of breast cancer and allowed her to remain a steadfast presence in the lives of her children and grandchildren. All have benefitted from her unconditional love and wise counsel. She is survived by her children Stephen, Mark, Paula, and Leslie, as well as her seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Her enduring legacy is profound - she has left us with the gift of her constant love, a model for insatiable curiosity, and the lessons of a life fully lived.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEATHS MAY BE TELEPHONED FROM WITHIN NYC TO 212-556-3900; OR OUTSIDE NYC TOLL FREE 1-800-458-5522; OR SENT BY EMAIL TO NYTIMES@CLASSIFIEDSPLUS.COM FOR THE FOLLOWING EDITIONS: Until 4:00 PM the day before for Tuesday through Saturday editions, until 4:00 PM on Friday for Sunday's national edition, until 12:45 PM Saturday for Sunday's New York and late national editions, until 2:00 PM Sunday for Monday's editions. Photos must be submitted by noon the day prior to publication Tuesday through Friday. Photos for Saturday, Sunday and Monday must be submitted by 12 noon on Friday.

3 MUSIC

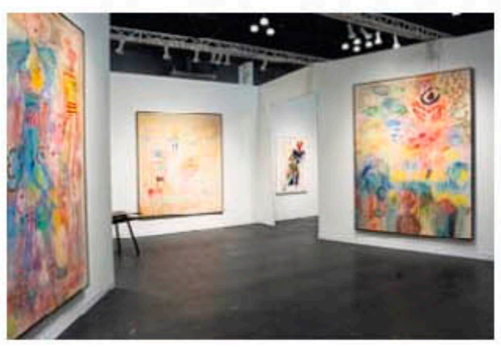
Accolades and influence for a jazz master.

BY GIOVANNI RUSSONELLO

8 ART FAIR REVIEW

Favorites from the bounteous Armory Show.

BY MARTHA SCHWENDENER



12 TELEVISION

Looney Tunes commandeers the ivory tower.

BY LAUREL GRAEBER

NEWS | CRITICISM

Weekend Arts

The New York Times

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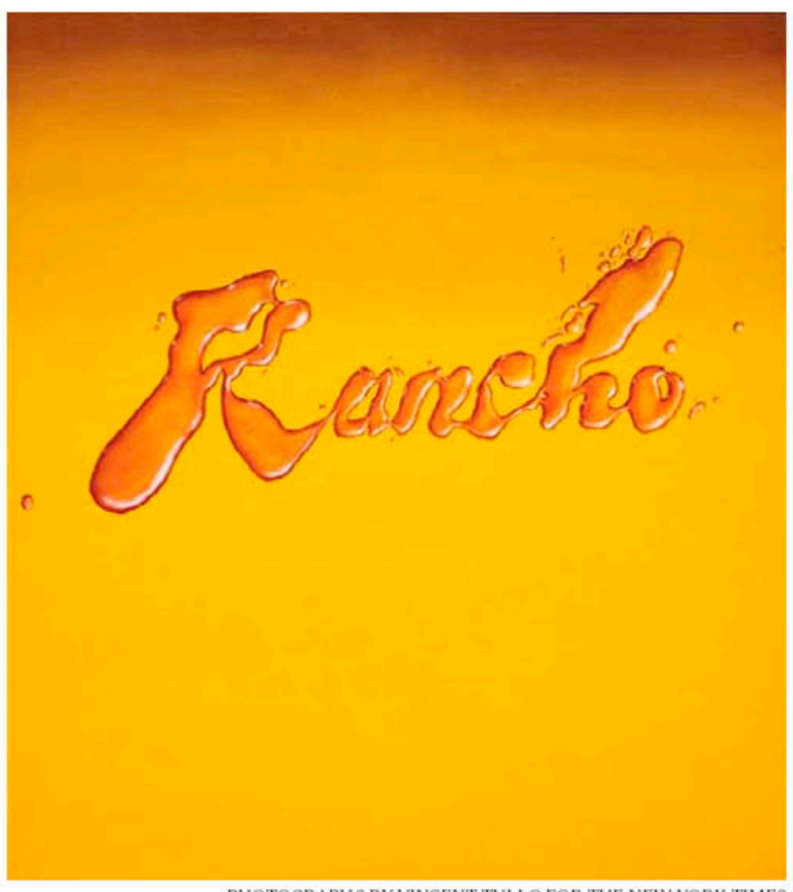
JASON FARAGO | ART REVIEW



PHOTOGRAPHS BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

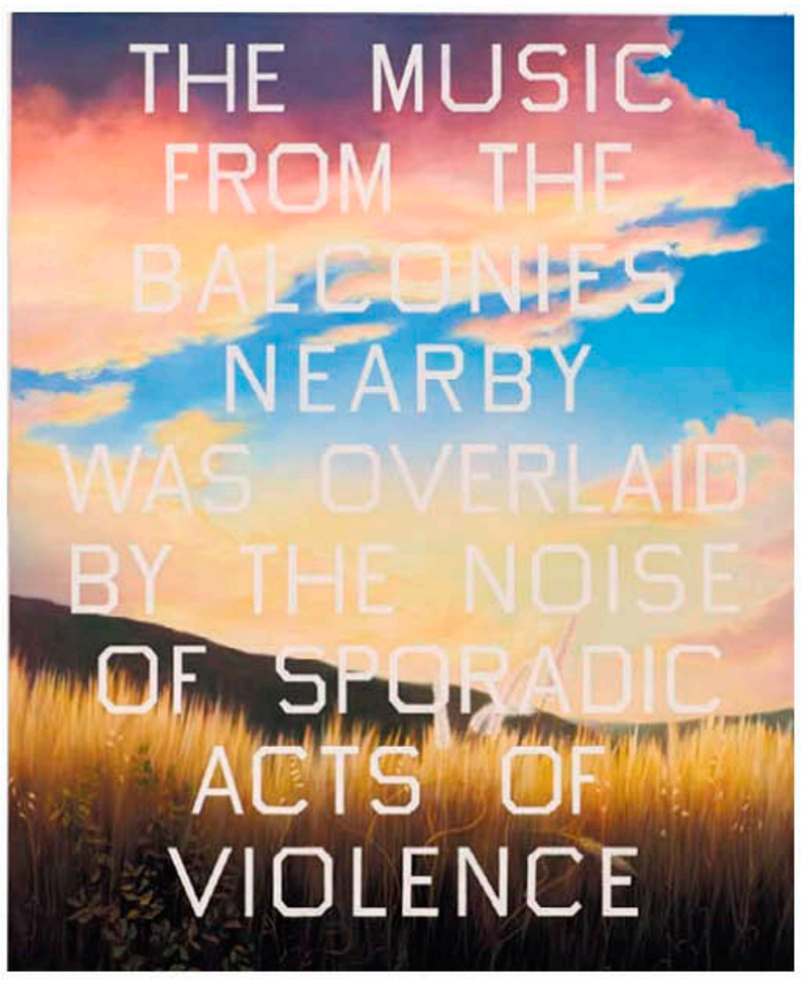
Art's Deadpan Laureate

Ed Ruscha, intrepid explorer of language and image, prefigured a digital culture of words on the move. A show at MoMA explores his career.

IN THE BEGINNING was the word; the image, with all its troubles, came later.

For 65 years now, Ed Ruscha has evaded the presumed exhaustion of painting through a linguistic trapdoor: an equation of language and picture, each putting pressure on the other to produce some of the keenest evaluations any artist has ever made of American life. It was an approach born from advertising and design, channeled into fine art. It looked like Pop, it looked like Conceptualism. It was neither; it was an artistic inquest into the essence of things. What *is* the essence of things? Might it not be something simpler than they teach in physics laboratories or divinity schools? Might it be, especially in America, something more mundane?

"Ed Ruscha / Now Then" opens to the public on Sunday at the Museum of Modern



Ed Ruscha/Now Then
CRITIC'S PICK
Opens Sunday
at the Museum of Modern Art

Art, and it is so finely calibrated, so well-balanced — so *cool*, in stylistic and emotional and HVAC senses — that you may not initially clock its scale. To call it the show of the season is something of an understatement. With more than 200 works, this is the largest retrospective ever mounted of this deadpan laureate of American art, and the most significant New York has seen since the Whitney Museum took a touring show in 1982.

There have been gallery presentations in the interim, and smaller museum showcases, such as the 2005 presentation at the Whitney of his "Course of Empire" cycle, first seen at the American pavilion of the Venice Biennale. But "Now Then" is the first New York museum show since the Reagan administration to engage his full career, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE C10

In the Ed Ruscha exhibition at MoMA, clockwise from top: "The Back of Hollywood" (1977); "Rancho" (1968); a detail from "Won't" (1964); and "People Getting Ready to Do Things" (1974). Left, "The Music From the Balconies" (1984).

A Legend's Memoir Has Arrived, Darling

Charles Busch's 'Leading Lady: A Memoir of a Most Unusual Boy' was years in the making.

By BEN BRANTLEY

Charles Busch, the celebrated male actress, Tony-nominated playwright and, most recently, exuberant memoirist, has been thinking that his bed might make a good stage. At his Greenwich Village duplex last month, he noted how the arched entrance to his blindingly white boudoir resembled a proscenium.

The room is in the style of 1940s-vintage Dorothy Draper, an interior decorator known for her Modern Baroque sensibility. It is the sort of place, Busch observed, that you could imagine Gene Tierney bedding down as the chic advertising executive (and presumed murder victim) in the glamorous 1944 film noir "Laura."

The show Busch would like to perform here, though, would be a production of Lucille Fletcher's radio play "Sorry, Wrong Number," in which a high-strung, bedridden rich woman overhears her own murder being plotted via a crossed telephone connection. The role was memorably played by Barbara Stanwyck in the 1948 film.

"I really should do it before I'm too old," said Busch, who was then a few weeks shy of 69. With brushed-back, graying hair and a mandarin-collared shirt and trousers (drag is for the stage), he resembled a discreetly bohemian college professor.

He figured an audience of 12 could be squeezed into the hallway. Busch himself, presumably in a luxe peignoir, would be waiting "in the bed, like Jessica Chastain," who sat onstage in a wordless prologue in the recent Broadway revival of "A Doll's House."

Busch, too, would be in character from the get-go, "eating chocolates and being neurotic." He plucked at the air with impatient, fidgeting fingers. Suddenly a doomed,

CONTINUED ON PAGE C4

Charles Busch at his home. His book is scheduled to be released on Tuesday.

JUSTIN KANEPS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

WEEKEND ROUNDUP

Bathroom Songs and Pub Dancing

Also on tap are a classical collaboration, a Rosh Hashana production for families and a rapper's return.

MARCUS SMITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Roscoe Mitchell will open Issue Project Room's season with John McCowen on Saturday in Brooklyn Heights. Beam Splitter is also on the bill.

1

CLASSICAL

ROSCOE MITCHELL AND JOHN McCOWEN

Sept. 9 at First Unitarian Congregational Society, Brooklyn

As renovation work continues on a permanent home on Boerum Street for Issue Project Room, it will ring in its new season on Saturday at 8 p.m. at the nearby First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn Heights. The organization will welcome the veteran composer and multi-instrumentalist Roscoe Mitchell, who will play in a duo with his onetime student John McCowen.

Mitchell has long crafted fruitful collaborations with his former students; an album from this year on the Wide Hive imprint is the latest evidence of this practice. As will be the case at Saturday's show, this recent recording features Mitchell on bass saxophone. Also on the bill is Beam Splitter, an experimental duo comprising Audrey Chen and Henrik Munkeby Norstebo, who use amplified vocals, trombone and electronics.

Tickets are $25 and available at issueprojectroom.org.

SETH COLTER WALLS

2

COMEDY

'THE WRITING ON THE STALL'

Through Sept. 23 at SoHo Playhouse, Manhattan

Spend enough time in a public bathroom, and you might notice (or perhaps contribute to) the graffiti on its walls. These improvised inscriptions can vary widely: A woman's stall might be more likely to feature inspirational messages, whether sincere or sarcastic; a man's stall could be covered in sayings and images that are decidedly more phallic.

The comedian Caitlin Cook (below) sings about the many differences on her third album, "The Writing on the Stall," for which she staged a full musical production that debuted at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and has now arrived in New York. Cook's one-hander finds her sitting on a toilet in the bathroom of a dive bar, playing guitar as she crafts songs about a range of lavatory missives. For added convenience and laughs, the graffiti is shown in close-up on an onstage screen.

Shows run Wednesday through Saturday, starting at 9 p.m., and each night will feature a different opener, including Marcia Belsky, Jo Firestone and Josh Gondelman. Tickets are $30 on OvationTix.

SEAN L. McCARTHY

3

DANCE

DANCE NOW/NOW: THE DANDELION PROJECT

Through Sept. 9 at Joe's Pub, Manhattan

For many years, the Dance Now festival at Joe's Pub marked the beginning of New York's fall dance season, with dozens of artists presenting short works of five minutes or less on the pub's tiny stage. Gathering in that lively, intimate atmosphere to see the performances felt like a reunion after the summer hiatus, as well as a preview of upcoming productions and an introduction to new voices. The festival, which has been dark since the pandemic, finally returns this week with the same format and a new name.

Also returning is the warm and winning host TruDee (Deborah Lohse), who will guide audiences through four evenings, which will start at 7 p.m. and alternate between two distinct programs. Each night will feature around a dozen dancers showing new work, as well as a screening of "The Dandelion Project," a short film documenting the impact of Covid on the lives and the creative process of Dance Now artists.

Tickets are $30 and available at joespub.org.

BRIAN SCHAEFER

4

KIDS

'OUT OF THE APPLE ORCHARD'

Sept. 10-14 at Actors Temple Theater, Manhattan

Families observing Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, traditionally eat apples and honey, which symbolize sweetness and prosperity. But in "Out of the Apple Orchard," the lure of fresh fruit initially threatens bitter consequences.

Adapted by Ellen W. Kaplan from the first children's book in Yvonne David's Apple Tree series, Mesaper Theater's production, which opens on Sunday, focuses on 12-year-old Adam Bieman, the son of immigrants living in the Catskill Mountains in 1910. As Rosh Hashana approaches, and Adam's father becomes too ill to work, the boy begins to steal apples from a neighbor's orchard. But his conscience troubles him: Can good intentions ever justify a wrong?

Directed by Nicole Raphael, the show features puppetry and live violin music as it follows Adam on a path to a firmer understanding of the New Year's meaning. Tickets to the shows, which are at 3 and 7 p.m. on Sunday and Wednesday and at 7 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, start at $38.50 and are available through appletreeseries.com.

Young arts fans can also enjoy a Saturday evening concert at Symphony Space, where musicians including Norah Jones and Jesse Harris will perform "A Celebration of Gustafer Yellowgold." The title character, a friendly alien, is the star of the musical narratives created by the children's songwriter and performer Morgan Taylor, who died last year. Proceeds will benefit his family.

LAUREL GRAEBER

5

POP & ROCK

GUNNA

Sept. 9 at Barclays Center, Brooklyn

Sergio Kitchens, better known as Gunna, emerged as a new face of Atlanta rap in the latter half of the 2010s with a string of commercial successes and the backing of major hometown players like Young Thug. In his cool, melodic verses, the perks of his newly elevated status were manifest: His flow was fluid and unbothered, his lyrics flavored by references to luxury living.

Recently, Gunna's output has been weightier. "A Gift & a Curse," released in June, is the rapper's first album since entering a plea deal in an Atlanta criminal case targeting YSL, a rap collective with which he is affiliated. Sometimes pensive, sometimes defiant, the record is an unusually revealing document from an artist attempting to wrest back control of his narrative, and on several songs, he directly addresses the fallout of the YSL case.

On Saturday at 8 p.m. in Brooklyn, Gunna will play his first headlining show post-indictment. Tickets start at $50.50 on Ticketmaster.

OLIVIA HORN

JERRITT CLARK/GETTY IMAGES FOR JBL

Gunna will bring weightier material to Barclays Center on Saturday.

This weekend I have . . .

BY MARGARET LYONS

. . . a half-hour, and I like variety.

'INSIDE NO. 9' ON BRITBOX

BRITBOX

This British anthology series is a magical grab bag, perfect for anyone with decision fatigue who still wants a parade of delights. Episodes vary wildly in terms of tone and format: Some installments are thrillers, others are silly style parodies, and most have a tricky twist. The only true through line is that each episode features the number nine and takes place in a single location. Season 8, which arrived on BritBox last month, includes a spooky Christmas tale, a bright spin on necromancy, a game show that doesn't go according to plan (hosted by Lee Mack, above) and an off-kilter love story.

. . . a half-hour, and I'm tired of the grind.

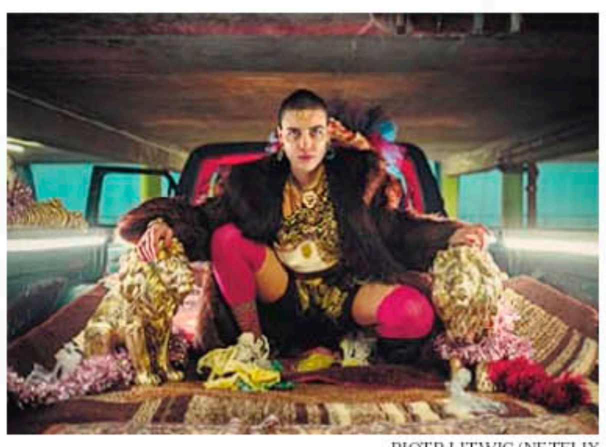
'DREAMING WHILST BLACK' SUNDAY AT 10 P.M. ON SHOWTIME

DOMIZIA SALUSEST

Adjani Salmon (right) is a co-creator and the star of this six-episode British dramedy about Kwabena, an aspiring filmmaker trapped in a tedious job where he is subjected to nonstop microaggressions and overall cringey vibes. The show's frequent dream sequences are sometimes Kwabena's esprit de l'escalier, sometimes enchanting asides, sometimes just a reprieve from his demoralizing gig work. "Dreaming" started out as a web series, and the TV adaptation retains the individuality that defines that format, a real sense of originality and voice. The series begins streaming on Friday, and two episodes premiere each week.

. . . a few hours, and I want to be swept away.

'INFAMY' ON NETFLIX



PIOTR LITWIC/NETFLIX

The Polish series "Infamy" (in Polish, Romani and English, with subtitles or dubbed) is a traditional enough coming-of-age drama plot-wise, but thanks to its distinctive setting and vibrant performances, it feels fresh and intense, beautiful and special. The show centers on Gita (Zofia Jastrzebska, above), a 17-year-old Romani girl whose immediate family returns to Poland after living in exile in Wales for many years. It's a tough adjustment: Her community is subject to violence and discrimination, and she also bristles at being told to wear a skirt instead of pants and worries about being forced into an arranged marriage. If you miss "Unorthodox," or if you want a show about teenagers that is far more substantive than the typical wan fare, watch this.

GIOVANNI RUSSONELLO | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Musical Innovator To Push Forward From a New Perch

Terence Blanchard, the trumpeter and composer, has had a remarkable year, tapped as a 2024 Jazz Master and the leader of SFJazz in San Francisco.

SCOTT CHERNIS

DREW ALTIZER

Left, Terence Blanchard at SFJazz in San Francisco. Below, Blanchard, on trumpet, center, performing at the SFJazz Gala in June 2022.

TWO BIG ANNOUNCEMENTS came down recently about the trumpeter and composer Terence Blanchard — both monumental, neither one a surprise.

In June, the National Endowment for the Arts announced that Blanchard, 61, would receive a 2024 Jazz Masters fellowship, the highest lifetime-achievement honor available to an improviser based in the United States.

Then a month later, as if a reminder that this lifetime still has a few major chapters ahead, the nonprofit organization and performance center SFJazz named Blanchard its executive artistic director. Hardly any other musician has so solid a grasp on the scope of what's going on in jazz today — and no institution is as committed to reflecting, even goading, its growth.

A six-time Grammy winner, Blanchard possesses one of the most commanding and slippery trumpet styles in jazz, and for almost a decade he has led one of its most reliable ensembles, the E-Collective, full of musicians a couple of decades his junior. He has written and recorded over 40 film scores, including for most of Spike Lee's movies. Despite being a conservatory dropout himself, he has become a leading educator, helping shape programs at U.C.L.A., the University of Miami and the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz. And in recent years, he has made headlines for the back-to-back Met premieres of his two operas, "Fire Shut Up in My Bones" and "Champion."

All of which makes for relevant job training for the new role. "The thing that I've always loved about SFJazz is that they don't treat the music like it's a fossil," Blanchard said in a phone interview. "It's a living, breathing, ongoing thing. And they respect young artists who are bringing something different to the table."

Blanchard is taking the reins directly from SFJazz's founder, Randall Kline, who has run the organization since it started in 1982, always with a passion for what's next. "I remember thinking how much I love that dude," Blanchard said. "He was just a serious music lover who happened to be a promoter."

He 'had a vision that matched what we believed was important to this music in these times.'

DENISE YOUNG
SFJAZZ

SFJazz began as a jazz festival and traveling presenter around San Francisco. It convened a house ensemble of all-star musicians, the SFJazz Collective, in 2004, and opened the $64 million, state-of-the-art SFJazz Center in 2013. This week, Blanchard and Kline will both be at the kickoff for the center's 2023-24 season, the last booked by Kline.

SFJazz's board chair, Denise Young, who led the search for Kline's replacement, said Blanchard stood out because he "had a vision that matched what we believed was important to this music in these times."

Blanchard will relish the chance to pick up on one of Kline's pet obsessions: bringing new technologies to the SFJazz stage. And as a musician who consistently uses his platform to speak about social issues — recording music with Cornel West, dedicating an album to the memory of Eric Garner, putting narratives of Black queer life into song — he's also eager to confront questions of unequal access in a city where inequality continues to balloon.

He'd like to keep SFJazz high tech but low barrier when it comes to entry. To promote "outreach into the community," he said, he envisions a matinee concert program directed at students in local high schools, and a series of traveling shows that might bring SFJazz-level talent into some of the Bay Area's more neglected neighborhoods.

Last week Blanchard stole an hour for an interview from his new office there. The building buzzed around him as the team prepared for the season launch, and by the end of the call an assistant was hovering, waiting to whisk him away to a donor meeting.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Blanchard broke out on the New York scene in the early 1980s — the so-called Young Lions era, when many were longing for a return to the halcyon sounds of midcentury jazz. In 1982, he joined Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, taking over the trumpet chair from Wynton Marsalis, his childhood friend. Then he followed Marsalis onto the roster of Columbia Records, where he recorded a series of straight-ahead albums with a quintet he and Donald Harrison led.

While Marsalis doubled down on Neo-Classicism, founding and directing Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York as a beacon of tradition, Blanchard has veered toward the cutting edge. With his E-Collective, he has emulated Blakey in one crucial way: His side-musicians are all significantly younger. On other fronts, Blakey wouldn't recognize much of that quintet's tool kit: the electronic effects, the hip-hop backbeats, the swatches of distorted guitar and electric bass.

So there's something poetic about seeing Blanchard — the Young Lion-turned-innovator — land at SFJazz, which has long been positioned as a kind of left-coast alternative to Marsalis's JALC. "The idea was eclecticism: Don't fly the flag of one thing," Kline said in an interview. "San Francisco at the time had all these amazing scenes going: There was an Asian American jazz scene, there was this kind of trad-jazz scene, there was this hard-core avant-garde thing going, there was Brazilian music and Afro Cuban music."

To the extent that SFJazz has developed a winning formula, Kline said, "it's been a formula around being open."

That conviction came in handy when Blanchard was invited to SFJazz in the mid-2010s for a series of artist residencies. He had recently composed "Champion," which tells the tragic story of the world champion boxer Emile Griffith, and an opera company in San Francisco was hoping to stage it. The center had never done an opera before, and sure, this wasn't exactly "jazz," but it was just the kind of ambitious project that the center was built to handle.

"It fit so perfectly with our programming aesthetic, and also getting creative around the space," Kline said. "It was just as good as it gets."

When Blanchard had first been approached about an opera commission in the early 2010s, he was thrilled. His father had sung opera, and he had grown up hearing Puccini and Verdi in the house, along with the sounds of jazz and Black popular music. But he wasn't sure where to begin.

So he did what he'd done at so many inflection points throughout his career: He went to his teacher, Roger Dickerson, a now 89-year-old composer and pianist and a New Orleans music giant in his own right, who had helped Blanchard write his first large-scale compositions.

"He told me, 'Stop thinking about writing an opera, just tell a story,'" Blanchard remembered. "That was extremely helpful for me, because then I wasn't trying to live up to something."

"Tell your story" is, of course, a catchphrase among jazz musicians. But partly thanks to his work with Dickerson, Blanchard has developed a special aptitude for using music to narrate ideas and convictions, which swiftly moves listeners past any fixation on genre. Dickerson also thinks of it as a reminder that complexity, nuance and misdirection don't have to dilute narrative drive, or even relatability, but can in fact enhance a story line.

"He could pick up on little things that I would show him, and very quickly discover the inside meaning of it. That is, make it his own," Dickerson said in an interview, remembering Blanchard's interpretive skills even at age 16. That ideal — learn the fundamentals, and then make something undeniably yours — is something that Blanchard has passed on to his own students.

Ambrose Akinmusire, who studied with Blanchard in the 2000s, remembered him stopping class whenever he heard students making direct references to old jazz tropes. "We don't do that here," he recalled him saying.

On the flip side, Blanchard remembers having to convince the cast of "Fire" that they should draw upon their whole musical lexicon. "I'm listening to them warm up, and I'm realizing a lot of those singers grew up in the church, sang gospel, some of them were jazz singers — but they were all taught to throw that away when you sing opera," he said.

"I said, 'Listen, man, bring all of that back to your performance. This is a current story, so hearing gospel in the middle of this is no problem. Hearing you sing a blues phrase, because you're a jazz musician, is no problem.' And, man, I can't tell you the type of performances we got out of people."

Illness Sidelines Springsteen

His performances through September are postponed.

SCOTT ROTH/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bruce Springsteen (left, with Stevie Van Zandt last month) will be treated for symptoms of peptic ulcer disease.

By ORLANDO MAYORQUIN

Bruce Springsteen announced on Wednesday that he would postpone performances with the E Street Band for the rest of September, as he is treated for symptoms of peptic ulcer disease.

Springsteen, 73, had been scheduled to perform on Thursday in Syracuse and seven more times in cities in the Northeast and in Ohio during the rest of the month.

"We're heartbroken to have to postpone these shows," he said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter. The post continued: "We'll be back to pick up these shows and then some. Thank you for your understanding."

Springsteen's medical advisers decided to postpone the shows, according to the announcement. The new lineup of postponed concerts comes weeks after Springsteen postponed two August shows in Philadelphia because of an illness. Those shows were postponed until next August.

Peptic ulcer disease causes sores on the stomach lining and can cause stomach pain, heartburn, bloating and nausea, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Springsteen and the E Street Band had just capped a string of three shows at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, his home state.

JEOPARDY! CLUE OF THE DAY

BEG

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FOR THE CORRECT RESPONSE, WATCH JEOPARDY! TONIGHT OR LOOK IN THIS SPACE MONDAY IN THE TIMES.

Yesterday's Response: WHAT IS MECCA?

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THEATER DIRECTORY
Your daily guide to theater

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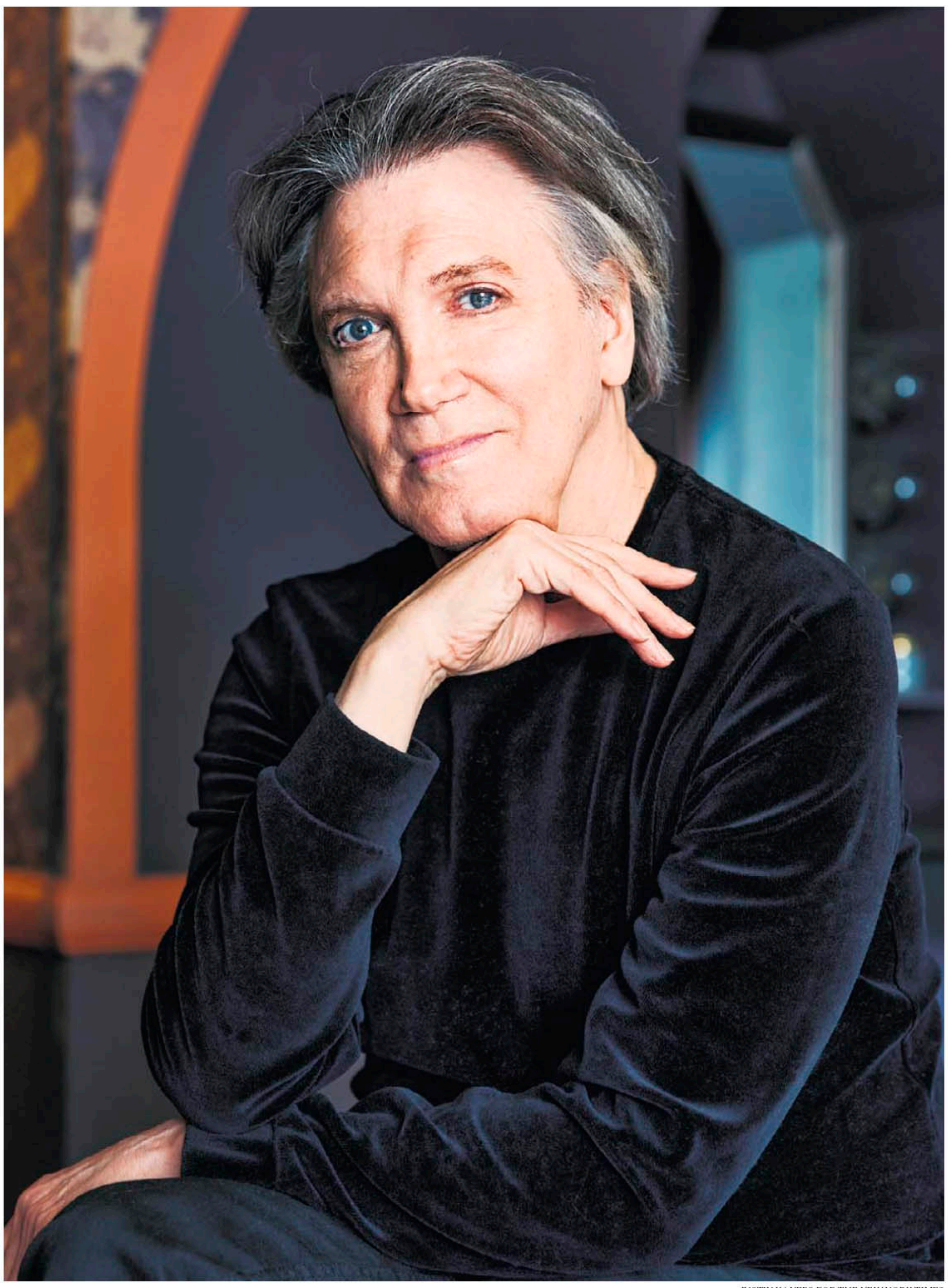
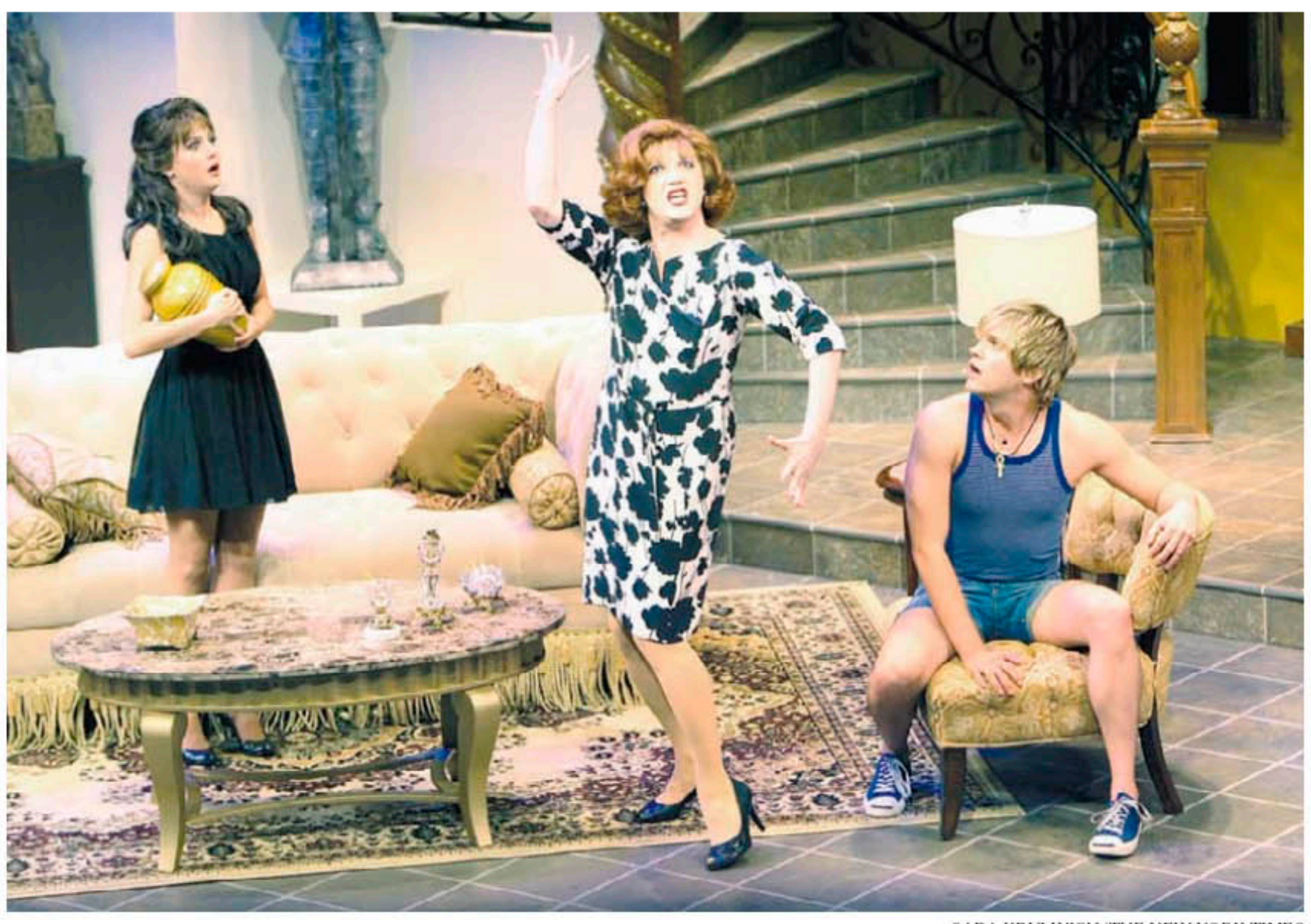


JUSTIN KANEPS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BRUCE GLIKAS/FILMMAGIC, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Left, Charles Busch. Above, from left, Lawrence M. Bullock, Busch and Matthew Cusick in "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom," which had a five-year Off Broadway run in the mid-1980s.



SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left, Ashley Morris, Busch and Van Hansis in the play "Die Mommie Die!"

SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Busch with Amy Rutberg at the SoHo Playhouse in the 2010 show "The Divine Sister."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

desperate invalid woman seemed to loom before me. I felt dizzy, caught between a shiver and a giggle.

I had arrived just 10 minutes earlier chez Busch, whose "Leading Lady: A Memoir of a Most Unusual Boy" comes out on Tuesday. But already much of the essence of this man who plays women had been established: the encyclopedic frame of reference, the conjuring of a sparklingly sophisticated Manhattan, the summoning of a decades-spanning parade of actresses and, above all, the giddy Judy-and-Mickey-style excitement of putting on a show.

These elements are much in evidence in "Leading Lady," a book that brings to mind "Act One" — Moss Hart's classic account of a sentimental education in the theater — but with a lot more wigs and costume changes, as well as a blithe detour working as a rent boy for nine months. And, of course, a different roster of famous names as supporting players, who here include Liza Minnelli, Carol Channing, Angela Lansbury and Kim Novak.

Though the book was 14 years in the making ("I wrote many plays in between, darling"), autobiography would seem to come naturally to a man who says, "While I am living an experience, I am turning it into narrative." Assembled as a time-scrambling mosaic of reminiscence and self-analysis, "Leading Lady" chronicles the ascent of a motherless boy who discovered that he was really good onstage only when he put on women's clothes.

"When I play a male role, I'm fine," he said, "but there's somebody else who could do it better. But as far as being a male actress, I have a pretty healthy ego."

Busch's crowded résumé includes screenplays (his movie with Carl Andress, "The Sixth Reel," in which he appears in and out of drag, will be screened in New York this month), national cabaret tours and the authorship of a hit Broadway comedy, "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife."

But as the memoir's title suggests, Busch is above all a leading lady. His self-starring plays — inspired by the female-centric melodramas of vintage Hollywood — usually find him elaborately bewigged and begowned, cherry picking gestures and inflections from the likes of Stanwyck, Jean Harlow, Rosalind Russell and Joan Crawford. These traits coalesce into a single, swirlingly allusive portrait, usually of a strong, fabulously dressed woman in jeopardy.

John Epperson, Busch's longtime friend and, as the great Lypsinka, his peer in the downtown cross-dressing pantheon, sees both their work as part of a tradition of live performance that dates to drag antecedents like Charles Ludlam, the founder of the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, which presciently blurred the lines between both genres and genders. It was a sensibility taking fresh forms in East Village bars four decades ago like the Pyramid Club and the Limbo Lounge, the birthplace of Busch's breakout work, "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom." "As someone once said to me, 'Observe the absurdities in the culture,'" Epperson said. "I think I was already doing that! And that's what he does, too, in his own angled way."

Staged Off Broadway with minimal budgets and maximal inventiveness, Busch's plays have usually been everything their redolent titles promise — "Vampire Lesbians" (which had a five-year Off Broadway run in the mid-1980s), "The Lady in Question," "Die Mommie Die!," "The Divine Sister" and, most recently, "The Confession of Lily Dare," which ran in New York shortly before the pandemic.

At first, they're just a hoot. Shaped by a mix of sincere affection and amused distance, they echo the experience of watching the films that inspired them. It's an approach that has allowed Busch to maintain a singular position in the increasingly crowded world of drag, which has become both the stuff of prime-time entertainment (see: "RuPaul's Drag Race" and its progeny) and a political lightning rod. With its gleeful emphasis on the extravagantly made-over self, drag would seem to be a perfect fun house mirror for a culture ever more obsessed with the illusions — and truths — of self-presentation.

At the same time, men dressing as women now routinely evokes fire-breathing outrage from American conservatives. "That's all just a snare and a delusion," Busch said of the right-wing attacks on cross-dressing. "It's like 'Footloose' or something," he added, referring to the 1984 film about a small town that prohibits teenagers from dancing. "It would be funny if it weren't so dangerous."

For years, Busch bristled at being called a drag queen; in early interviews, he insisted that performing as a woman was purely an artistic choice. It is a stance that now embarrasses him. "If you base your entire creative life around female imagery, it has to come from somewhere profound," he said.

'If you base your entire creative life around female imagery, it has to come from somewhere profound.'
CHARLES BUSCH

From the moment he first donned drag for a play about Siamese twins he wrote while a student at Northwestern University, he realized that a female persona allowed him a confidence and expressiveness he lacked performing as a man. Today, he is happy to be called a "godmother of drag." Reached on tour in California, two notable stars from "RuPaul's Drag Race" confirmed Busch's claim to that title.

BenDeLaCreme said Busch's performances were "like this distillation of our collective queer conscious." Jinkx Monsoon, who met Busch for lunch, found him to possess "all the grandeur and sparkle of an opera diva, the self-awareness of a vaudeville clown and the grace of a first lady giving a tour of the White House." The actor Doug Plaut, who worked with Busch on "The Sixth Reel," views him as a surrogate mother, as well as "the most fascinating person who has ever lived."

Busch's own mother died of a heart attack just down the street from their home in Hartsdale, N.Y., when Busch was 7, and her absence pervades "Leading Lady." His father, who owned a record store, was affable but inattentive, and Busch's maternal aunt, Lillian Blum, a smart, arts-loving widow who lived in Manhattan, stepped into the vacuum.

She was in essence "both my mother and my father," he said his therapist pointed out. Busch sees her as the true hero of his book. She died in 1999.

Busch was also very close to his sister Margaret, who was three years older. "We were like empaths," he said. "We were both really good mimics. And she was the most feminine, fragile little thing, but her Jimmy Cagney had as much nuance as my Greer Garson." She died of heart disease on July 13, and when I visited Busch a few weeks later, he was still raw from the loss.

SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Busch in the 2020 show "The Confession of Lily Dare" at the Cherry Lane Theater.

He choked up talking about the comedian Joan Rivers, the most dominant of the mother figures he's been drawn to throughout his adult life. "After she died, I was kind of sniffing around a bunch of older ladies, thinking I'd find another one," he said. "But you can't replace people."

He did seem a bit washed-out that day, especially amid the vibrant portraits of him throughout the Chinese-red living room to which we had adjourned. These included Busch à la Dietrich, on a sofa cushion; Busch as Sarah Bernhardt in moody black and white; Busch as a springy human exclamation point per the theater illustrator Al Hirschfeld; and a host of diversely made-up busts Busch created from his own face mask.

It felt like the natural setting for someone who habitually shifts among different selves. As we talked, his voice most often brought to mind not his beloved movie goddesses but the aw-shucks wholesomeness of the boy-next-door matinee idol Van Johnson or a young Jimmy Stewart.

The women would surface, though, in bursts of ripe annotation — the breathless booming of Bette Davis, the stateliness of Norma Shearer or the "deadpan look that's slightly mad" that shows up, he said, in every performance by Vivien Leigh, his favorite actress.

He's thinking of at last incorporating the patrician tones of Katharine Hepburn, circa "Long Day's Journey Into Night," into his next production, "Ibsen's Ghost: An Irresponsible Biographical Fantasy." It's about the epochal dramatist Henrik Ibsen's widow, who is "sexually awakened by a sailor"; it is scheduled to arrive in New York early next year.

"It may be my farewell performance," he said solemnly. I reminded him that he had said the same thing about "Lily Dare" a few years ago.

"Yes, that was going to be my farewell performance," he agreed, a bit testy. "But I don't know." He then landed the requisite one-liner with a dry Eve Arden drawl: "I don't have enough hobbies."

Movies

AMY NICHOLSON | FILM REVIEW

Their Family Message Is Clearly Heard

YANNIS DRAKOULIDIS/FOCUS FEATURES

From left, John Corbett, Maria Vacratsis, Melina Kotselou, Nia Vardalos, Elena Kampouris, Andrea Martin and Elias Kacavas.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3
Rated PG-13 for a suggestive scene on a nude beach with strategically placed slices of watermelon. Running time: 1 hour 31 minutes. In theaters.

A sequel's plotlines go to the more cacophonous members of the Portokalos clan.

NIA VARDALOS SEIZED the movie industry's attention two decades ago when she wrote and starred in the loosely autobiographical "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," an indie charmer that remains the highest-grossing romantic comedy of all time.

Audiences rallied behind her relatable Toula Portokalos, a wallflower Chicago waitress who straightened both her hair and her spine despite the protests of her domineering family. As Toula fought to leave her father's restaurant, forge her own career and marry her non-Greek boyfriend (John Corbett), many moviegoers saw themselves in her hard-won successes.

But so much for empowerment this time around. "It's a badge of honor to take care of people," Toula narrates humbly at the top of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3." This is the first film in the franchise that Vardalos not only performs in and writes, but also directs — although, in truth, she's barely the star.

This noisy sequel cedes the punchlines and the plotlines to the more cacophonous members of the Portokalos clan, particularly Andrea Martin's returning scene-stealer, the busybody Aunt Voula. ("I'm not a gossip, I'm a tattletale," Voula huffs.) While the ensemble bickers and schemes, or, in the case of Toula's preening brother Nick (Louis Mandylor), publicly shaves himself at inappropriate times, Toula's laughs come only at her expense. (Hitting her head, falling off a donkey and so forth.) The script functions like a recipe for its own opening shot of baklava; flattened and bland, Toula exists only to constrain the nuts.

The story starts after the passing of Toula's father, Gus, the patriarch played with grumbling affection by Michael Constantine, who died in 2021. To honor Gus, a grab-bag of family members takes their first-ever trip to Greece to visit his mountainous childhood home, a near-abandoned hamlet near-ish the beach. Only a few people remain in the village, and two of them are secretly dating — the series's core trope remains a hushed romance.

This and dozens of other tiny conflicts ripple through the movie, resolving themselves with a hug or an absent-minded cutaway before any one problem swells into something worth our concern. The oddest disposable gag comes when Toula blurts her sexual attraction to a mustachioed stranger (Alexis Georgoulis). The man immediately reveals himself to be a relative.

The ancient Greeks wrote tragedy after tragedy warning against hubris. Yet, Vardalos's flailing crowd-pleaser needs a shot of self-confidence and logic. Why has Toula, a micromanaging former travel guide, flown her relatives overseas without thinking to book a hotel? Why would we believe that her square daughter (Elena Kampouris) is, with zero evidence, a wild child on the edge of sabotaging her life? And why do some of the rural Greeks speak English with a better accent than Aunt Voula? Nothing adds up.

Not that I begrudge Martin a single one of her quips. If Vardalos is no longer comfortable at the center of the franchise, hand the whole thing over to her.

J. HOBERMAN | REWIND

Smuggled Images Of a Stunning Time

Three parts of a vital documentary can been seen in restored versions.

ICARUS FILMS

Chilean Army tanks in the streets, as seen in "The Battle of Chile."

The Battle of Chile
Through Thursday at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; bam.org.

"THE BATTLE OF CHILE," Patricio Guzmán's 264-minute account of the social whirlwind that engulfed Salvador Allende's socialist government in the early 1970s, is an epic documentary, an openly Marxist analysis and a stunning exercise in "you are there" vérité, not to mention a remarkable instance of contraband cinema — composed of footage smuggled out of fascist Chile and edited in communist Cuba to premiere at the radical fringe of the 1975 Cannes Film Festival (along with Chantal Akerman's "Jeanne Dielman").

Newly restored, the complete film — Parts 1 and 2 first seen in the United States in 1978, Part 3 in 1980 — opens at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Rose Cinemas and shows for a week.

The revival run coincides with the 50th anniversary of the *other* Sept. 11, the day of the military coup led by Augusto Pinochet — a tragedy that has remained Guzmán's career-long preoccupation, and that haunts the Latin American left to this day. The film comes at a time of renewed interest in the period that has included a new novel, "The Suicide Museum," by Ariel Dorfman, and the revitalized search for the remains of those who were "disappeared" during the dictatorship.

"The Battle" has three parts. "The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie" concerns the 1972 election, in which the right fails to win enough votes to impeach Allende and, encouraged by the United States, seeks other means to reverse his nationalizations. "The Coup d'État" begins with a "practice" coup in June 1973 and depicts Chile's descent into open class warfare, culminating with the real coup of Sept. 11. "The Power of the People" revisits the events of the year leading up to Allende's overthrow with an emphasis on the revolutionary spirit of Chilean workers.

Largely filmed with hand-held cameras by a team of five, "The Battle" is both action-packed and full of nonstop talk. Mass rallies jostle man-in-the-street interviews and political speeches. In one violent demonstration, a filmmaker is shot, documenting his own death. It is impossible not to be swept up.

The film had its U.S. premiere at Film Forum, one of the few commercial venues equipped to show 16-millimeter films. According to the programmer Karen Cooper, it was her small theater's first big splash, garnering much coverage. "Great films rarely arrive as unheralded as 'The Battle of Chile,'" the critic Pauline Kael wrote in The New Yorker at the time.

The New York Times critic Vincent Canby found the film "depressing" in its simplifications, although "undeniably an epic." Other critics were overwhelmed: Writing in The Village Voice, Tom Allen (in no way a leftist) called it "a magnificent achievement" and "the major political film of our times." Although rarely revived, "The Battle" has classic status, ranked 18th in a recent New Republic poll of the 100 most significant political films.

In addition to maintaining an unmistakable point of view, the documentary conveys a unique sense of immediacy. Guzmán returned from Spain in 1971, where he had studied filmmaking, to experience firsthand the euphoria that followed Allende's election. The exhilarating feel of participating in a society being remade fuels the film. If anything, the inevitable ending makes the unfolding situation seem even more urgent.

Opening with the aerial attack on the presidential palace during which Allende died, flashing back to the events that preceded the coup, "The Battle" ends with a moment that defies chronology. A doomed organizer bids farewell to the filmmaker: "We'll see you, comrade." The effect is like watching the river of history flow and disperse into the sea of time.

Rewind is an occasional column covering revived, restored and rediscovered movies.

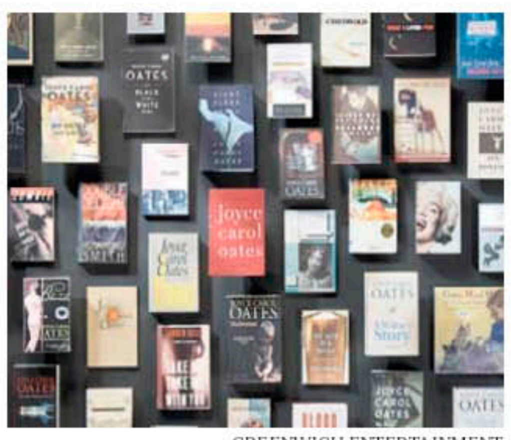
FILM REVIEWS

Joyce Carol Oates: A Body in the Service Of Mind

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters and available to rent or buy on most major platforms.

It's a modern-day tragedy that some people may know the writer Joyce Carol Oates primarily for her online presence — on social media, she has posted a picture of her foot oozing with blisters, and regularly voiced inflammatory opinions. It's odd — and oddly fascinating — behavior for such a literary heavyweight, one whose six decades of novels, short stories, essays and more have triggered fascinating debates about the intersection of violence, sexuality, race and womanhood (among other dark, distinctly American subjects).

There's much to chew on about the writer, now 85. Too bad the documentary "Joyce Carol Oates: A Body in the Service of Mind" only nibbles. Directed by Stig Bjorkman and narrated by Laura Dern, this work is so fixated on enshrining Oates within the canon of American literary giants that it skirts the peculiarity and provocation of her ideas.



GREENWICH ENTERTAINMENT

Exploring a literary heavyweight.

Bjorkman offers something like a glorified Wikipedia article. He identifies key moments in Oates's life (her marriages, her upbringing in rural New York) and too cleanly links them to the books that came out of them. For instance, "Them," Oates's 1969 masterwork, is explained as merely a reaction to the 1967 riots in Detroit. What's more, Bjorkman is uninterested in showcasing the beauty of Oates's prose or her often risqué interests — Oates's Marilyn Monroe novel, "Blonde," becomes a neutered feminist statement piece rather than the abject tale of mythmaking that it is.

An extended interview with Oates is woven throughout, though that tight-lipped writer doesn't care for confessions. If Bjorkman's breakdown is annoyingly textbook, he at least allows us to bask in the writer's uncanny presence. We look at Oates, her pursed lips and slightly dazed eyes, and can't help but ask: What is she thinking?

BEATRICE LOAYZA

Portrait of the Queen

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 20 minutes. Rent or buy on most major platforms.

Endless is the stream of programs that have, during the past 70 years, documented the life of Queen Elizabeth II. Yet "Portrait of the Queen" takes on a new angle, examining the creation of the queen's public image by, in its most effective moments, speaking to a handful of photographers who took her portrait during her reign.

It's a relatively interesting perspective to use in considering a monarch who remained obstinately inscrutable from her coronation in 1953 to her death in 2022, at 96. The documentary's most illuminating beats come from the photographers' recollections of private moments with the queen, when they observe her guarded persona punctuated by flickers of vulnerability.

Unfortunately, these scenes are few and far between in a film bogged down by superfluous sequences and formal inconsistencies: an overused, tonally confused score; two narrators (one of whom is a too-moodily-shot Charles Dance); and talking-head interviews that flit between ordinary citizens and seemingly random celebrities, including Susan Sarandon and Isabella Rossellini. (Fabrizio Ferri, the film's director and a fashion photographer, clearly called in a favor or two.)

Elements that could have made for a somewhat intriguing documentary become lost in what amounts to a tedious piece of agitprop that ultimately regurgitates the dutifully respectful picture of Elizabeth we've seen time and time again.

BRANDON YU

Office Race

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 22 minutes. On Comedy Central platforms.

"Office Race," a ribald comedy from Jared Lapidus about an inveterate deadbeat reluctantly training for a marathon, understands one of the great unspoken truths about running: that it is a miserable, arduous, soul-destroying pastime, and also deeply, profoundly rewarding.

Beck Bennett stars as Pat, a lazy, quasi-oafish sales rep at an investment app start-up. His idea of a marathon is watching all of the "Fast and Furious" movies in succession, but in a bid to woo a client who is zealously athletic, Pat claims a love of long-distance running — a lie that doesn't land him the deal, but does commit him to participating in a marathon in three months' time with the client's enthusiastic running club. Thus Pat aches, sweats, groans and generally hates his life. In other words, he learns to run.

Bennett makes for an adequate schlub, and his journey from the couch to 26.2 miles is satisfying if a bit too familiar — we get the usual sports movie beats, from training montages to motivational speeches. The supporting cast, though, is uniformly great, including the always-wonderful J. B. Smoove as a champion race-walker who advises Pat to partake of dipping tobacco to fortify his lungs, as well as Kelsey Grammer, in a small but funny part as a wise former coach turned owner of a sports store. But the "Office Race" M.V.P. is Joel McHale as Pat's maniacal, pun-loving boss and race rival, Spencer, who chugs energy drinks, has sex with Pat's girlfriend and goes insane in obsessive pursuit of marathon glory — a minor comic master class whose only fault is that Spencer doesn't appear in every scene.

CALUM MARSH

FILM REVIEWS

VIA FILM FORUM

"Hello Dankness" uses repurposed visual and audio clips to present a chain of associations about the American presidency.

Hello Dankness

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 10 minutes. In theaters.

CRITIC'S PICK In the pop-culture universe deconstructed — and reconstructed — in "Hello Dankness," the Ninja Turtles parse the Pizzagate conspiracy theory, Nancy from "A Nightmare on Elm Street" has lost sleep over the end of Bernie Sanders's 2020 presidential campaign and a "Home Alone" era Macaulay Culkin spends his pandemic watching "Tiger King."

Written and edited (though not, strictly speaking, directed) by Soda Jerk — the name adopted by Dan and Dominique Angeloro, sibling video artists from Australia who live in New York — the whole movie consists of repurposed visual and audio clips, digitally tweaked and deftly edited to interact with one another, and to present a chain of associations about the United States from 2016 through the start of Joe Biden's presidency.

Even before its title card, "Hello Dankness" opens with a full airing of the Kendall Jenner ad that Pepsi pulled because of complaints it trivialized Black Lives Matter. If you think what follows is outlandish — well, just look at that commercial, which could easily have run before the movie in a conventional theater and plays as if that were happening. In the funniest interlude, the Trump administration's first three years are reduced to the deliberately slapdash YouTube "Garfield" parody "Garfielf," with Trump's pompadour pasted on top of the fat feline's head.

Covid-induced stir craziness and the spread of misinformation on social media are shown as contributing factors to what the movie portrays as a national mental breakdown. You don't have to agree with all of Soda Jerk's diagnoses to admire their ingenuity. "Hello Dankness" belongs to a venerable tradition of treating refracted entertainment as a mirror for society. No fan of Ken Jacobs's "Star Spangled to Death," Richard Kelly's "Southland Tales" or Joe Dante's "The Movie Orgy" could help but smile.

BEN KENIGSBERG

The First Year

Not rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

CRITIC'S PICK A few years before Patricio Guzmán directed his tripartite masterpiece, "The Battle of Chile," about the events leading to the C.I.A.-backed military coup that toppled President Salvador Allende's socialist government in 1973, the Chilean filmmaker made "The First Year": an account of the inaugural year of Allende's rule. Guzmán traveled through Chile, interviewing working-class people about Allende's policies and accumulating a crackling portrait of hope and incipient change.

The French filmmaker Chris Marker saw the documentary in 1971 and decided to help show it in France, enlisting actors, including Delphine Seyrig, to dub the Spanish dialogue in French. That version, arriving this week in a sparkling restoration at Anthology Film Archives, is a remarkable document not only of a fleeting moment of historical promise, but also of an earnest gesture of international solidarity. (See the Rewind column on Page 5.)

Guzmán's documentary is a people's microhistory of a nation in transition. He talks to Indigenous peasants about Allende's land-redistribution programs, miners and factory workers about the nationalization of resources being exploited by American business, fishermen about policies designed to liberate them from predatory middlemen. Guzmán's camera is dynamic, probing faces and gazes with curiosity, and his interviewees are forthright. The film throbs with jubilant energy, culminating with Fidel Castro's visit to Chile in 1971.

To this capsule of a time and place, Marker adds framing context for a French audience, summarizing the colonial history of Chile in a pithy prologue. This sense of a dual perspective permeates the film: The faint audio of the Spanish interviews mingles with the French dub, like a whispered dialogue, simultaneously local and global in its address.

DEVIKA GIRISH

ICARUS FILMS

President Salvador Allende of Chile, in the documentary "The First Year," directed by Patricio Guzmán.

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets Of the Universe

Rated PG-13 for anti-gay violence and cussin' like they do in Texas. Running time: 1 hour 36 minutes. In theaters.

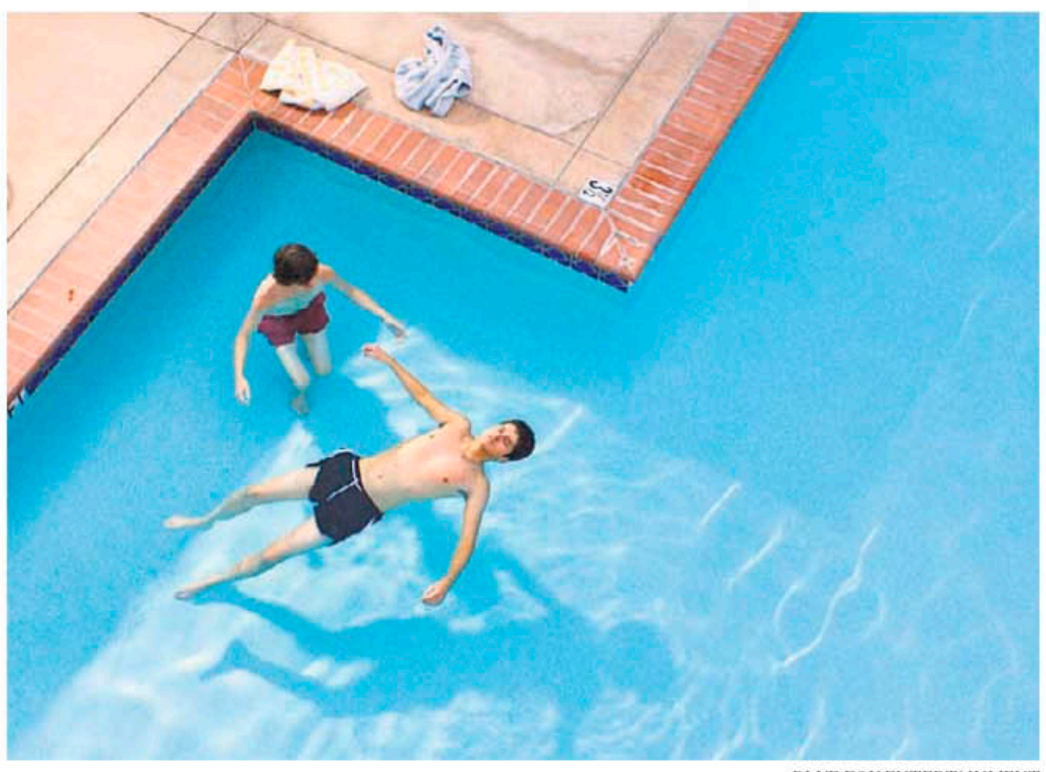
In the 1980s, it was nothing to wander the mall, from Spencer's to Waldenbooks, with no direction. Similar ambling takes place in the screenwriter-director Aitch Alberto's sweet-at-heart but lukewarm indie drama about two Mexican American high schoolers coming of age in 1987 El Paso.

Based on Benjamin Alire Sáenz's eponymous young adult novel, the film tracks the friendship between Aristotle, or Ari (Max Pelayo), and Dante (Reese Gonzales), who meet on a hot day at a swimming pool. Ari is drawn to Dante's curiosity about the world, the byproduct of Dante's art-loving parents (Kevin Alejandro and Eva Longoria). It's worlds away from Ari's solemn but loving mother and father (Eugenio Derbez and Veronica Falcón), who know something's up when their kind son befriends Dante, who favors mesh tank tops and yearns to visit the Louvre.

As Ari and Dante tiptoe into boyfriend-ish territory, Alberto takes disruptive detours, including a car accident, a brother we don't talk about and, most strangely, having an unseen Dante narrate letters to Ari when Dante's family relocates to Chicago. (AIDS is a blip, glimpsed only on a newscast.) Dante's return sets in motion the forecast feel-good finale.

Pelayo's naturalistic easy-breeziness is a convincing contrast to Gonazles's self-aware performance as a more worldly city-seeker who's a bus ticket away from becoming a club kid. A less sentimental, wish-fulfilling approach to Mexican American identity, gay self-discovery and Reagan-era Texas will wait for another day. Until then, fans of "Heartstopper"-style slow-burn romance will eat up this tender film's subtle charms.

ERIK PIEPENBURG



BLUE FOX ENTERTAINMENT

Reese Gonzales, top, and Max Pelayo in Aitch Alberto's indie drama "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe."

VARIANCE FILMS

Michael Goorjian in "Amerikatsi," which he also directed.

Amerikatsi

Not rated. In Armenian, English and Russian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. In theaters.

In the late 1940s, the Soviet Union invited Armenians living abroad to resettle in Soviet Armenia. In "Amerikatsi," the actor-director Michael Goorjian imagines one such journey and finds an unusual way to express the aching urge to reconnect with one's roots.

Goorjian plays Charlie, a naïve, bumbling American who returns to Armenia years after being spirited away as a boy during the genocide. Despite befriending a Soviet official's wife (Nelli Uvarova), he gets thrown in jail as a suspicious interloper. Charlie languishes behind prison walls, and is mocked and beaten by guards. As awful as that sounds, the film's tone stays on the light side, even hokey, warmed by Charlie's hopes.

Charlie finds an escape from despair by gazing into an apartment visible from his barred windows. He realizes that the man he's watching, a bearish, temperamental painter named Tigran (Hovik Keuchkerian), is a guard in the prison's watchtower and turns out to be Armenian. So Charlie takes to eating his meager meals at his window, following along with Tigran's marital woes, dinner toasts, and attempts at painting.

The setup eloquently symbolizes the predicament of many who, like Charlie, left their homelands very young. His heart beats Armenian even if he speaks English, yet a nagging distance wards off total belonging. But he schemes indirect ways to communicate with the guard and finds a kindred spirit.

It's an intriguing scenario, though not always played out skillfully. For better and worse, we feel Charlie's confinement fully, as he watches another's life go by and yearns for a proper home of his own.

NICOLAS RAPOLD

Rotting in the Sun

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 49 minutes. In theaters.

In his new movie, the Chilean filmmaker Sebastián Silva plays a version of himself locked in a self-loathing spiral. Mired in a creative pit, Sebastián is snorting drugs in his Mexico City apartment, reading E.M. Cioran's "The Trouble With Being Born" and doing web searches for "suicide by Pentobarbital." In need of a change, he travels to a bacchanalian gay beach, where he meets the writer and Instagram influencer Jordan Firstman (also playing a refracted version of himself). It's not long before the ebulliently opportunistic Jordan pitches a show: "'Curb Your Enthusiasm,' but positive." Eventually, Sebastián invites him to his place in the city for some writing sessions.

The movie's title works in both a literal and a metaphorical way. The first involves a spoiler, so let's just say that a major twist redirects the story just before the halfway mark.

The metaphorical interpretation captures — often graphically — mechanically hedonistic lives dominated by an insatiable need for instant gratification and almost entirely filtered through social media. "Rotting in the Sun" is sharpest when exploring the two men's love-loathe connection because Silva threads a provocatively fuzzy line between fascination for and irritation with Jordan and, by extension, Firstman himself. Reflecting that push-pull, he invites Sebastián to "come meet my friends — you'll hate them."

But the movie loses both focus and edge when it switches to a low-boil showdown between Jordan and Sebastián's housekeeper, Señora Vero (a great turn from the Silva regular Catalina Saavedra, who starred in his breakout film, "The Maid"). By the end, it's the film's point that has turned murky.

ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Scouts Honor: The Secret Files of the Boy Scouts of America

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. On Netflix.

Almost three years ago, ahead of a bankruptcy court deadline, more than 82,000 people came forward with sexual abuse claims against the Boy Scouts of America. The mostly male survivors were of all ages and came from every state. Some of them had kept mum for decades.

"Scouts Honor: The Secret Files of the Boy Scouts of America," directed by Brian Knappenberger and streaming on Netflix, is a walk-through of the case. A solid chunk of its running time is spent with Michael Johnson, a former director at the Boy Scouts who has since become an outspoken critic of its youth protection practices. As the film tracks the organization's history of abuse and cover-ups, Johnson recounts hitting brick walls during his efforts to change the system.

News-based passages remind viewers about the organization's wholesome image, as well as its links to the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Bland archival footage supports the history lesson, and the film pans across enough headlines to populate a Sunday paper.

Knappenberger does, thankfully, make space for survivors to share their own accounts, and their vulnerability lends authority to an otherwise anonymous film. At one point, a middle-aged man laments not having the chance to tell his late mother about the abuse he endured as a child. These are heart-wrenching moments. Unfortunately, the film fails to build on them, leaving the culture of shame and stigma that muzzled these men to hover in the air, unexplored.

NATALIA WINKELMAN

NETFLIX

Michael Johnson in "Scouts Honor."

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Fine Art

WILL HEINRICH | ART FAIR REVIEW

Unseen Masterpieces

In its second edition, a boutique fair brings more than the usual offerings to New York.

FOR ITS SECOND EDITION, again at the Battery Maritime Building at 10 South Street in Manhattan, the Independent 20th Century art fair — a spinoff of the contemporary-art-focused Independent — offers as dense a selection of top-shelf art as you'll find this week. There are Warhol portraits **(Vito Schnabel Gallery)** and Picasso drawings **(Perrotin)**, sure. But there are also tooled and dyed leather "paintings" by Winfred Rembert **(James Barron Art)**, a solo presentation by the painter Peter Nadin overlooking the harbor **(Off Paradise)** and a number of historical artists rarely shown in New York or in the United States. As you'd expect from a high-end fair this rigorously curated and this small — just 50 artists showing in 33 booths — the exhibits are long on painting, the easiest medium to sell. But there are also sublime Southern Washoe style baskets by Louisa Keyser **(Donald Ellis Gallery)** and a group of spectacular early-20th-century totems from Vanuatu **(Venus Over Manhattan)**, among other sculpture. What follow are the booths that particularly caught my eye, but the decisions weren't easy. Getting in will cost you $45 at the door, but the information-chocked Online Viewing Room is free.

Independent 20th Century
Through Sunday at Cipriani South Street in Manhattan; independenthq.com.

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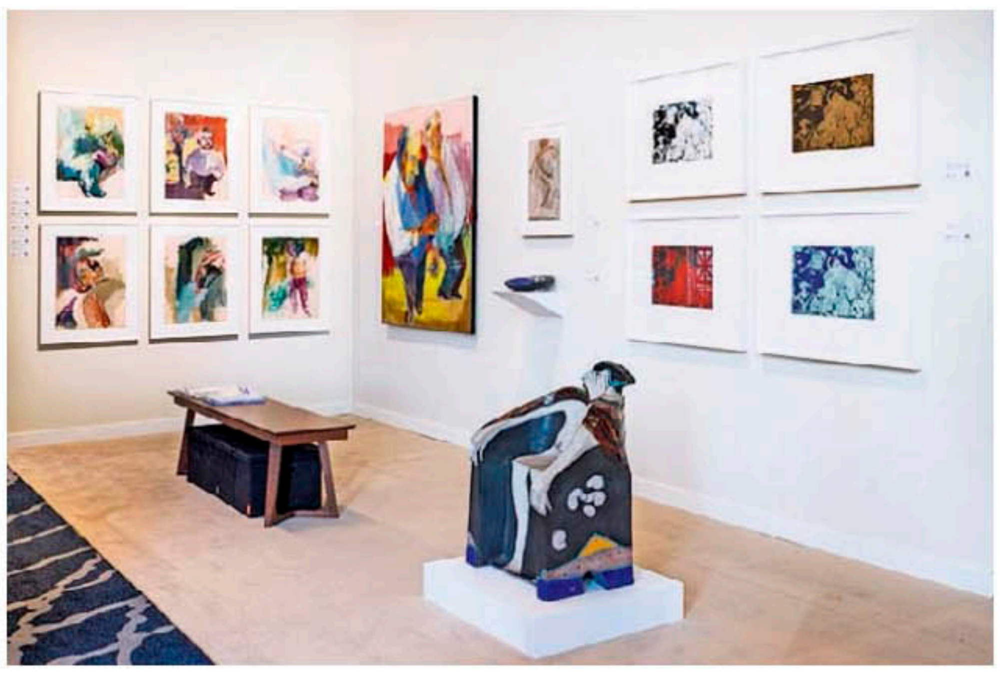
A small Picasso drawing (left wall) at Perrotin, and two Warhol portraits at Vito Schnabel (right) at the Independent 20th Century art fair.



A three-artist presentation of work by the feminist artists Vivian Browne, Camille Billops and May Stevens, at Ryan Lee.

Ryan Lee

This is a dense three-person presentation of work from the '60s and '70s by the feminist and activist artists Camille Billops, Vivian Browne and May Stevens, all of whom were involved with the downtown gallery SOHO20, founded in 1973. There's something very satisfying about the almost whimsical rage in Browne's oil on paper "Little Men" series, but for me the booth's highlight is Billops. A delicately drawn nude glowers in a chaotic landscape filled with backward cursive writing in her four-part etching series "I am Black, I am Black, I am Dangerously Black," while "Madame Puisay," a glazed earthenware chair with another nude drawn on it, is a transfixingly weird combination of sharp edges and wobbly lines.

Wanda Pimentel, "Untitled," from her "Envolvimento" series (1968).

Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel

Wanda Pimentel (1943-2019) lived in Rio de Janeiro and was associated with the Brazilian New Figuration movement. Though she has recently appeared in a pair of group shows, these eight paintings from her "Envolvimento" series (1968-84) constitute her first American solo. It won't be her last. Her tightly constructed geometric interior scenes, as rich with color as advertising posters, split the difference between the industrial and the domestic. Add some female feet or toes at the edges and you have art for art's sake wrapped around a briskly cutting edge of social commentary.

Works by Sergio Lombardo feature silhouettes of politicians.

1/9unosunove

In the early 1960s, the Italian artist Sergio Lombardo made a series of political silhouettes by tracing photo projections of figures like Kennedy or Khrushchev onto paper or canvas with industrial black enamel. (He called the series "Gesti Tipici" or "Typical Gestures.") Pointing, scowling or gesticulating, the familiar faces in this presentation by a Roman gallery are at once larger than life and less than human; often, the eye-catching white of a collar or cuff is the most expressive detail. But aside from "Rockefeller," who's as syrupy as an oil slick, the faces all catch the light with rough, zigzagging brushstrokes.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

At the James Fuentes booth: "5 Roses/Painted Rookwood Pottery" (1978), top, and "Untitled" (1990), by Ed Baynard.

James Fuentes

It's not surprising that Ed Baynard (1940-2016), a painter experiencing a posthumous career upswing, was also a graphic designer. The acrylics and watercolors in this decade-spanning presentation make vases, bowls and gracefully springy flowers look as sharp as paper cuts. But they aren't quite flat. Detailed rose petals, in one untitled 1978 piece, float atop dark green stems with such precisely observed droops that they're almost still quivering. As much as they recall wallpaper or woodblock prints, their effect is most like a silent garden seen through a pane of glass.

Mario Deluigi's "Grattage G.R. 099" (1970), at Galleria Tommaso Calabro.

Galleria Tommaso Calabro

I almost walked past a group of what the Italian Spatialist Mario Deluigi called "grattages," monochromes this Milan-based gallery said are making their debut in New York. They're easy to misunderstand — they can look like upholstery — but fortunately some instinct pulled me back and I discovered that they're almost shockingly gorgeous. Covered in intricate networks of tiny white scratches, they offer starscapes, cave drawings, the glowing wool of primordial sheep, and patterns that contain calligraphy or circles of dancers à la Matisse.

Edith Schloss's "Melograno" (1979), an oil on canvas, at Alexandre.

Alexandre

Edith Schloss's posthumous 2021 memoir, "The Loft Generation," was a light but singularly delightful artifact of the time this German-born artist and writer, who lived in New York from 1942 to 1962, spent among the midcentury Abstract Expressionists. Her painting, appearing here in three quirky still lifes and a yellow, palimpsestlike landscape, is the same (it is hung alongside a broader selection of paintings by Loren MacIver). Schloss's leaning vases, floating polka dots and an inexplicable little pencil-drawn elephant all glow with so much self-possession and charm that they can't help but magically brighten your day.

Paintings by Marie Laurencin at Nahmad Contemporary: left, "Jeunes Danseuses" ("Young Dancers") (circa 1925); right, "Jeune Fille au Collier de Perles" ("Young Girl With Pearl Necklace") (1933).

Nahmad Contemporary

Coming ahead of a retrospective at the Barnes Foundation, this presentation of eight small canvases offers a chance to get acquainted, or reacquainted, with the otherworldly women and girls of the Parisian painter Marie Laurencin (1883-1956). With powder-white skin and black ovals for eyes, pictured against vague backgrounds of gray and smoky pink, her willowy subjects evoke ghosts, or fairies, or porcelain, or Japanese masks. But they also, somehow, look fully human and individual, and Laurencin's palette and unusual style carry as much information about her models' feelings, and their social setting, as her drawing does.

Sigmar Polke's "Untitled (Dr. Feelgood)," a silver print on paper.

Sies + Höke

These ambiguous, multilayered silver prints are from the early career of the German photographer Sigmar Polke (1941-2010). In the black and white "Untitled (Dr. Feelgood)," a man in a striped jacket holds a "Dr. Feelgood" poster demurely in front of his face. The image repeats once, rotated 90 degrees — or seems to. In fact, the man has lowered the poster in the second iteration and is grinning, as if to say, "Pay attention, buddy! Wake up! You're dreaming!" The gallery has also brought Polke's battery-powered "Kartoffelmaschine / Potato Machine — Apparatus Whereby One Potato Can Orbit Another," one of an edition of 30.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER | ART FAIR REVIEW

A Market Champion, in a Back-to-School Edition

Amid the sea of purchasable wares lurk extraordinary histories and insights. Here are a critic's 11 favorite booths.

The Armory Show
Through Sunday at the Javits Center in Manhattan; 212-645-6440; thearmoryshow.com.

IT'S BACK TO SCHOOL in the art world. The fall season, historically characterized by a deluge of new exhibitions, now includes art fairs that have tailored their schedules to coincide with the first wave of gallery and museum openings. The Armory Show, the mega-fair making its third fall appearance at the Javits Center, offers 225 galleries from 35 countries, a far cry from its humble beginnings in 1994 with art works propped on the beds at the Gramercy Hotel. (But even mega-fairs can be absorbed by larger entities: In July, London-based Frieze acquired the Armory Show and Expo Chicago.)

The current Armory Show also boasts a curriculum of live talks, offsite installations and even a curatorial leadership summit that gives the impression of an academic conference. The purpose of the fairs remains commerce and bolstering market values, though. So there is a lot of painting, that perennially sellable commodity. Surrealism and Cubism are touchstones here, and figurative painting dominates. Amid the sea of purchasable wares, however, are some extraordinary stories, histories and insights. While last year's fair skewed toward Latin America, this year Indigenous artists are everywhere, and the overview is global. Here are a handful among the many booths that deserve mention, even if you're only window shopping.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jean Shin (Platform, 11)

Platform is a lozenge-shaped area in the middle of the fair given over to projects organized by the curator Eva Respini under the theme "Rewriting Histories." A standout here, presented by Boston's Praise Shadows Art Gallery, is Jean Shin's "Huddled Masses" (2020, above), which features three outcroppings inspired by scholar's rocks in Zen gardens. Look closer though and the rock-forms are encrusted with mobile phones from the last 20 years, surrounded by a mangle of computer cables. Where traditional scholar's rocks and Zen gardens promoted mental and spiritual clarity, here your mind wanders to e-waste (which is what Shin's materials actually are) and what it means to meditate in an age of endless distraction.

Artists Space (Booth N10)

Over at the nonprofit Artists Space, Drake Carr will be drawing friends and family in a booth outfitted to resemble a cozy capsule-size New York apartment, above. Carr's work customarily involves what he calls "Housecalls": drawing and painting his subjects in their habitats. Here, his invited portrait sitters will bring personal items to include in the drawings. Since Carr is inspired by fashion illustration and many of his subjects are in the fashion industry, a common thread in his work concerns what people wear and how that shapes identity and community.

56 Henry (Booth P36)

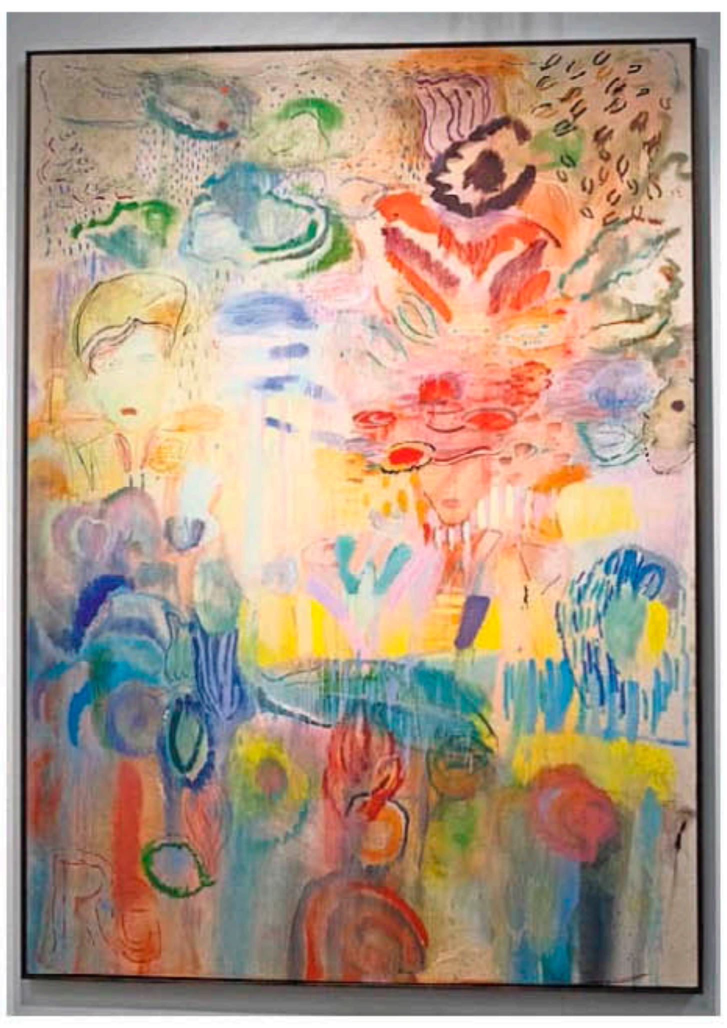
Nearby is another local artist and gallery, LaKela Brown at 56 Henry, with sculptures and wall reliefs, above, that use sly humor to celebrate and memorialize African American history and hip-hop culture. Stark white plaster and resin are used to cast corn, okra, collard greens and jewelry like rope chains and chunky "door knocker" earrings. When Brown titles them "African/American Still Life," the allusion to art history is solidified but the unpainted white plaster sculptures also have a deadpan delivery, as if the life were sucked out of the vegetables.

Nature Morte (Booth 218)

Nature Morte is the well-regarded New Delhi gallery started by the American artist Peter Nagy over two decades ago. The booth has a healthy roundup of his stable of artists — often a boring fair format — but which offers a window into new art in India. Of particular note is a gorgeous wall hanging by Sagarika Sundaram, "Iris" (2023, above) made of wool, silk and bamboo silk. Fiber arts have been in the spotlight in recent years — along with ceramics and other media historically considered "craft" — and Sundaram's lush composition, mimicking the folds of a flower, is an excellent example of why sewn, woven, knotted and knitted objects hold such interest, particularly in an age when "software" generally means something cold and digital.

Fridman Gallery (Booth F15)

I will profess to being a Milford Graves fanatic. The late jazz percussionist, artist and Bennington professor — a native of Queens — was a visionary who invented his own martial art called Yara, based on praying mantis movements, African dance and the Lindy Hop. His assemblage at Fridman Gallery, "Bikongo-Ifa: Spirit of the Being" (2020, above) includes tabla drums, an acupuncture model, an African Nkondi figure, computer monitors showing heart readings — and a whole lot of other curious stuff. Graves is paired with Remy Jungerman, whose collage-paintings mix patterns drawn from Surinamese Maroon culture with 20th-century modernist planes and grids.



Ingleby Gallery (Booth 419)

And then there was more painting. How to choose between the hundreds, maybe even thousands of canvases here? Lorna Robertson's paintings at Ingleby Gallery of Edinburgh, above, stand out because they are bright, playful, colorful — and commandingly large. But they are also smart, taking a century and a half of revolutionary art — including Impressionist pastels and expressionist gestures and drips, Symbolist dreaminess and oddball feminist stridency (think Florine Stettheimer or Jutta Koether) — and sticking them into a blender. What comes out is bold but approachable. It draws you in, then whips you around a little bit.

Patel Brown (Booth F12)

It's hard to miss the giant earth-colored figure crawling out of the Canadian gallery Patel Brown's booth, above. Made of polymer clay, synthetic hair and other materials, the humanoid creature wears a mask — or perhaps its face is a mask. Made by Marigold Santos and Rajni Perera, the sculpture suggests deities and mythic figures from the artists' cultures (Santos is from the Philippines and Perera from Sri Lanka), as well as life-changing experiences like motherhood. In their hands, art also becomes a place to create hybrids or new "Indigenous" sprites and spirits, drawing from imagined, imperiled or lost ones.

Maruani Mercier (Booth 401)

The Black model in figurative painting has been one of the reigning modes of the last decade. (The Obama portraits were the tip of the iceberg.) A good example in this context is Kwesi Botchway at the Belgian gallery Maruani Mercier. Botchway's dramatic "Flower Boy" (2023) series of paintings contrast dark skin with deep red backgrounds, lips and eyes, above. The young man in the paintings, holding a fragile spray of flowers, looks at turns peaceful and demonically possessed — an apt depiction of paradoxical youth perhaps, but also a potential comment on the politics of race and representation.

Zielinsky (Booth F28)

Among the solid historical presentations this fall are the performance photographs of a Brazilian artist, Vera Chaves Barcellos, at the Barcelona gallery Zielinsky, in the Focus section of the fair curated by Candice Hopkins. Barcellos's "On ice" (1978) series, above, captures the artists Flávio Pons and Cláudio Goulart whirling around on a frozen lake in Amsterdam, while "Keep Smiling" (1977) is a grid of photographs featuring the artist and her friends with identity tags hung around their necks. Residing somewhere between portraits and mug shots, the project commented on how to survive under the military dictatorship in Brazil.

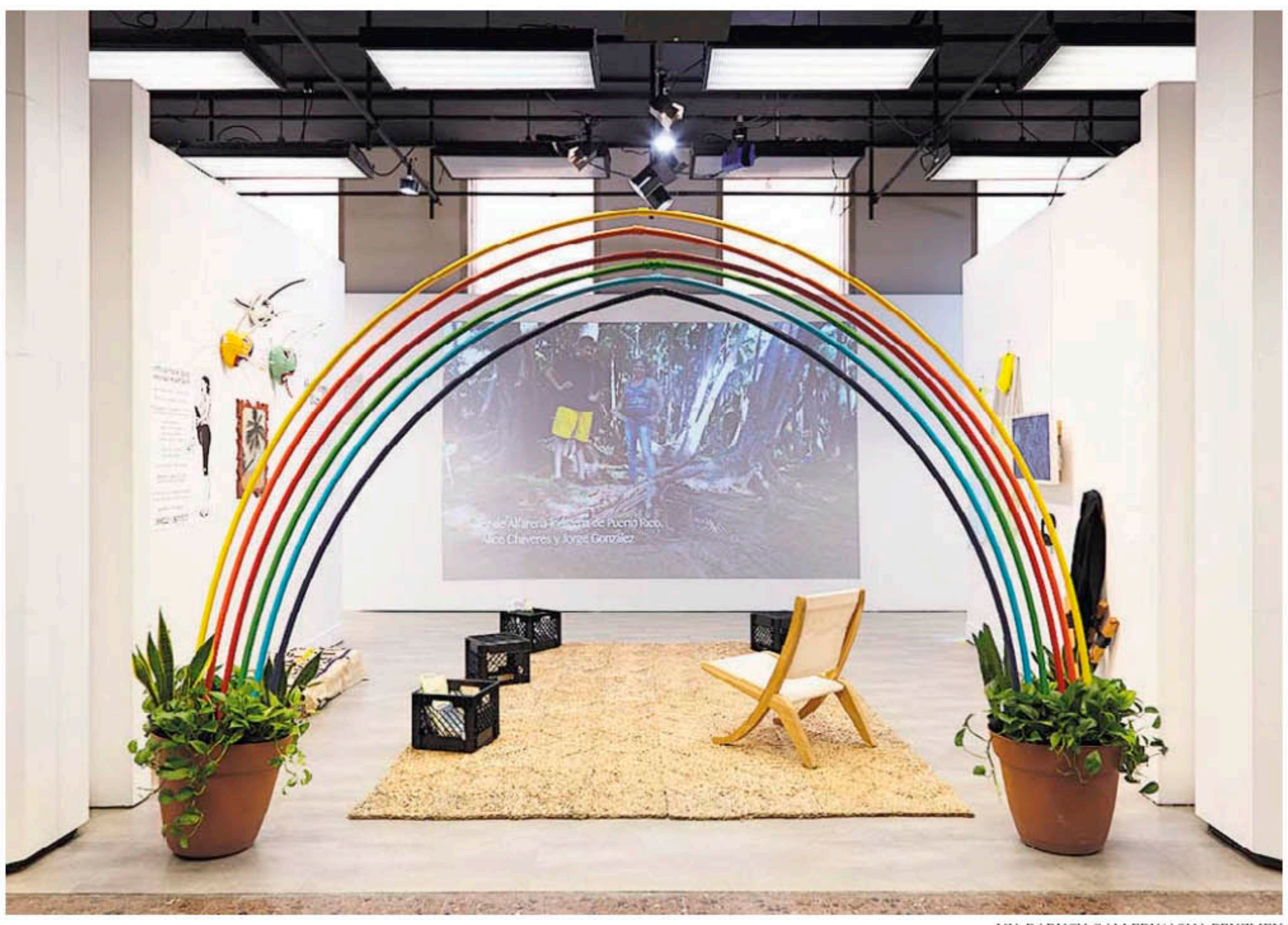
Charlie James Gallery (Booth S8)

Farmworkers are the primary subjects of the Oaxaca-born, California-based Narsiso Martinez's paintings on cardboard boxes, above, at the Los Angeles gallery Charlie James. Their humanity, individuality and warmth are particularly highlighted. Martinez plays around with art-historical references too: saints' halos in religious paintings are echoed in golden bar codes framing the heads; a still life is served up as a fruitful offering by a smiling figure. Painted on shipping boxes for bananas, there's also a sense of the absurd embedded within his poignant activism.

Martin Art Projects (Booth P27)

Then there is the Sudan-born, Cairo-based artist Salah Elmur, whose back story is almost as captivating as his haunting Cubo-Surrealist paintings on view at the Cape Town gallery Martin Art Projects. Elmur's father had a photography business in Khartoum, and his family possesses an archive of approximately 20,000 photographs from which he draws his subjects — often the "degraded" photos with double exposures and other flaws. Next to one painting, "Red and White Rose" (2023, above) is a corresponding photograph of two women. The canvas itself is an oasis of calm and gentle connection, a reminder that painting can serve this purpose in places of tumult, whether war-torn countries or commercial art fairs.

GALLERIES



VIA BARUCH GALLERY/ASHA PENZLIEN

An installation view of "We didn't ask permission, we just did it . . . ," featuring the Gran Tropical Bienal section.

'We didn't ask permission, we just did it . . . '

Through Dec. 8. Mishkin Gallery, 135 East 22nd Street, Manhattan; 646-660-6653, mishkingallery.baruch.cuny.edu.

Six years ago, Puerto Rico endured the perfect storm of Hurricane Maria and a fiscal crisis, while decolonization discourse peaked on the mainland. But the art scene there has long been grass roots and adaptable. Embajada (or "Embassy"), the curatorial moniker of Manuela Paz and Christopher Rivera, ambitiously take the recent history of Puerto Rican biennials to Manhattan, with a survey of work previously included in three series of international group shows staged between 2000 and 2016. The artists and issues that emerged there remain active and acute. Several participants, like Edra Soto and Daniel Lind-Ramos, have appeared lately in big Caribbean surveys at the Whitney and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. The show at Mishkin provides some background.

At the gallery, a line of rolled coins snakes around a vitrine of ephemera. The Mexican artist Damián Ortega produced "100 dólares de dieta" for the first PR Invitational by living without cash and exchanging his $100 stipend for 10,000 pennies. The Gran Tropical Bienal embraced beaches and jungles, represented here by "Escuela de Oficios," the cattail-fiber mat and crates of printed matter of an outdoor library by Jorge González Santos. On the wall, the mesh "Ponchos Anti-Zika" by Jessica Kairé embody the specter of fever. Mike Egan organized the three Cave-In shows in a cavern that once sheltered nationalist rebels. Artists like Rivera, Andra Ursuta and Candice Lin produced work in situ. Andy Meerow pasted the rock with posters reading "Wet Pain"; on Mishkin's walls, that raw message hits home.

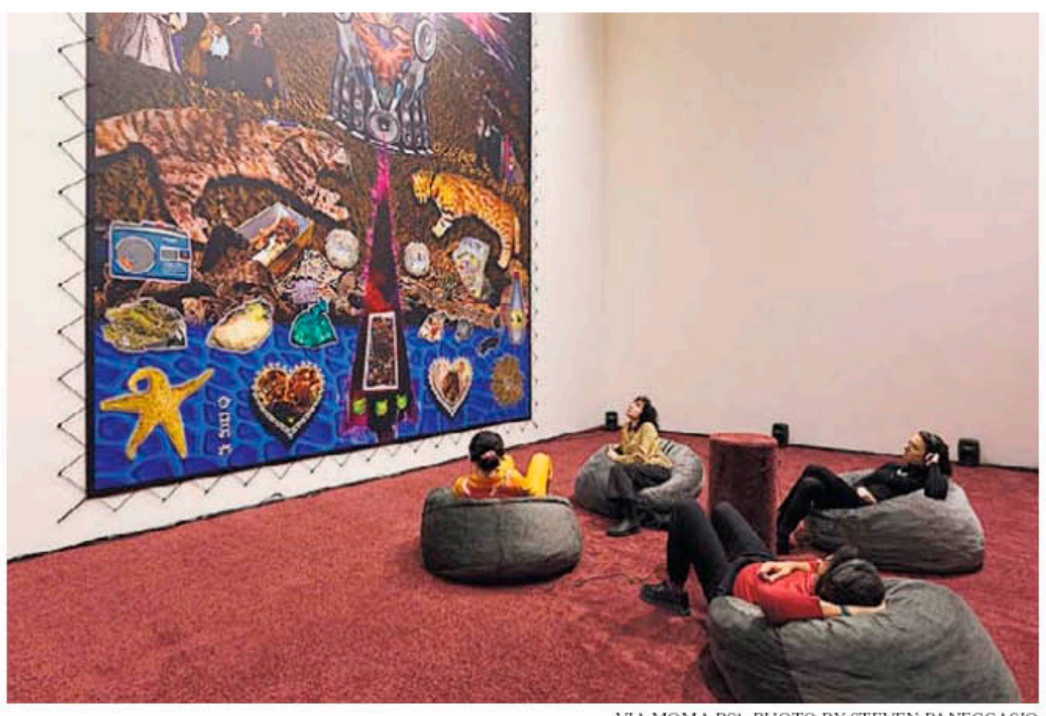
TRAVIS DIEHL

Chuquimamani-Condori and Joshua Chuquimia Crampton

Through Oct. 2 at MoMA PS1; 22-25 Jackson Avenue, Long Island City, Queens; 718-784-2084, momaps1.org.

Early in the last century, Francisco Tancara helped Protestant Adventist missionaries build schools in Bolivia on Indigenous land. Today, this labor — presumably on behalf of the Indigenous Aymara community — has been used to justify the church's continuing presence on Native land. These and similar stories form the basis of a project at MoMA PS1 by Chuquimamani-Condori and Joshua Chuquimia Crampton, siblings based in California who belong to the Pakajaqi Nation of Aymara people — Tancara was their great-great-grandfather — and who have also released a series of highly acclaimed musical recordings.

The installation here, which refers to their ancestors being confronted by representatives of the colonial church and state, included two Indigenous and migrant justice symposiums, a live musical performance and what remains: a collagelike banner that stretches two floors, and a seating area in front of this "talking altar." The banner reads like a cosmic map or sci-fi video game, but also enacts an Aymaran form of writing with images called qillqa. In the center is a large qillqa head that breaks apart to reveal photos of Tancara and the artists' great-great-grandmother, Rosa Quiñones. You can listen on headphones to stories about a family who bought back their land from a colonial government, as well as accounts of sundry brushes with the authorities.



VIA MOMA PS1; PHOTO BY STEVEN PANECCASIO

Works at MoMA PS1 by the siblings Chuquimamani-Condori and Joshua Chuquimia Crampton, who have Indigenous roots in Bolivia.

Rather than merely recounting tales of dispossession, though, the siblings refer to their work as "medicine" — specifically Aymara q'iwa and q'iwsa medicine, or "queer medicine." Forget aesthetic contemplation, artistic innovation or monetary value. The goal here is art reclaimed by the artists for ritual use: healing old historical wounds — and even, perhaps, a sick and ailing planet.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER

Fairs for the Fall Season

Each year, the weekend after Labor Day means a spate of art fairs across New York City. The temperature (hopefully) drops; the art on display surges. Whether you're into sprawling expositions or smaller, subversive fairs are more your speed, there is something for everyone in the burst of art on display this weekend. Here's a guide to some of our favorites.

THE ARMORY SHOW Anchoring the rush of art fairs is the show that galvanized some of the satellite fairs on this list under the umbrella of Armory Week. This year, the labyrinthine Armory Show will present 200 galleries from 30 countries in addition to programming its third edition of Armory Off-Site, an outdoor art program that brings large-scale artworks to New York's parks and other public spaces. General admission is $55; a multiday pass is $130. *Through Sunday at the Javits Center, 429 11th Avenue, Manhattan; thearmoryshow.com.*

THE INDEPENDENT 20TH CENTURY A new iteration of the Independent Art Fair emerged in 2022 to champion artists and international avant-garde movements from 1900-2000. Returning for its second edition, the Independent 20th Century spotlights lesser-known artist narratives and practices worthy of a closer look. Single-day tickets are $45; a run-of-show ticket is $90. *Through Sunday at Cipriani South Street, 10 South Street, Manhattan; independenthq.com.*

TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Paul Feeley's oil-based enamel painting "Vespasian" (1960), which is at the Independent 20th Century.

ART ON PAPER The paper fair returns to Pier 36 with 100 galleries for the fair's ninth edition, showcasing the creative potential of paper; the Artist Book Fair, which celebrates book art; and the reintroduction of Flat Files, which features fine art printmakers and publishers from around the world. A single-day ticket is $35; an all-access pass is $65. *Through Sunday at Pier 36, 299 South Street, Manhattan; ny.thepaperfair.com.*

PHOTOFAIRS NEW YORK Debuting at the Javits Center is this fair dedicated to photography and new media. Photofairs presents trends in fine art photo-based works, experimental filmmaking, virtual reality and NFTs, all with a focus on the intersection of technology and photography. Day tickets are $35; an all-weekend pass is $90. *Through Sunday at the Javits Center, 429 11th Avenue, Manhattan; photofairs.org.*

SPRING/BREAK ART SHOW The fair known for showcasing the works of nascent and young artists — which most recently has taken place inside Ralph Lauren's former Madison Avenue offices in New York — is back, with the theme "Wild Card." Expect works inspired by pleasure-seekers, mystics and jokers. Spring/Break aims to expand arts access by offering no- and low-cost exhibition space for artisans. Day tickets are $42; run-of-show tickets are $107. *Through Monday at 625 Madison Avenue, Manhattan; springbreakartshow.com.*

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JASON FARAGO | ART REVIEW

The Deadpan Laureate of American Art

Above, "Large Trademark With Eight Spotlights" (1962). From far left, "Ace" (1962); "Boss" (1961); "Honk" (1961-62). Right, "Brother, Sister" (1987). Below, far left, clockwise from top left, "I Dont Want No Retro Spective" (1979); "I Live Over in Valley View" (1975); "Artists Who Do Books" (1976), "Psychedelic-Indian-Guru-New Mexico-Fadeout-Photo-Realism" (1976); "Orange Roller" (1976); "Artists Who Make 'Pieces'" (1976); "Find Contact Lens at Bottom of Swimming Pool" (1976); "Thick Blocks of Musical Fudge" (1976). Below, middle, "Pay Nothing Until April" (2003). Below right, "Our Flag" (2017).

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

to give his photo books the same attention as his poker-faced paintings. (The show has been organized with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, to which it will travel in April.) Christophe Cherix, MoMA's chief curator of drawings and prints, has produced a discreetly historic exhibition — which, I suspect, will have immediate relevance for a generation habituated to the touch-screen, and to its thousand daily digital collisions of text and JPEG, PNG, GIF.

It spans the whole top floor of the museum, and it is blessedly stripped of the Los Angeles romanticism that has attended Ruscha in East Coast or European museums. (A 2002 retrospective in Madrid was literally called "Made in Los Angeles.") It refuses the seductions of the open road. It's more analytical than I expected, more rhythmic, much less breezy. It thinks hard about English words, American pictures, the lies both can tell. In places, it feels like a walk-in version of Ruscha's smooth, serial paintings, yet there are also flare-ups of organic instability: notably a whole gallery covered in sheets printed with melted chocolate.

Edward Ruscha was born in 1935 in Omaha and grew up in Oklahoma City. (It's *rew-SHAY*, though everyone struggles with this; while working a paste-up job at Artforum, he grinned and bore the mispronunciations under the pseudonym Eddie Russia.) When he turned 18 he headed west and enrolled in the design program of the Chouinard Art Institute, now known as CalArts. He admired the verve and spontaneity of Abstract Expressionism, but when he tried to paint like Pollock it felt like a parody. The freedom that American gestural painting once embodied had already receded into a brand. His art was going to have to be cooler — not unlike the straight-faced riddles that Jasper Johns was posing in New York at the same time.

Ed Ruscha/Now Then
CRITIC'S PICK
Sunday through Jan. 13 at the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan; 212-708-9400; moma.org.

"It was an enormous freedom," Ruscha said later, "to be premeditated about my art." And during a seven-month sabbatical in Europe in 1961 (documented in this show through charming snapshots), the artist found a number of visual tropes that, when translated into painting, functioned like distantiation techniques. One was commercial signage, with its clarity and high contrast. He began to isolate monosyllables — ACE, BOSS, HONK, OOF — without additional imagery against solid backgrounds.

Conversant of course with Pop, these early word paintings drew just as much on the example of Picasso, Braque and Gris, whose Cubist collages took the frankness of advertising and rendered it strange to itself. The double vowel of "OOF" has the boiled-down geometry of Johns's targets, an onomatopoeic gut-punch. The blue serifs and black negative space of "ACE" meet in three-dimensional schmears as thick as Barney Greengrass's.

A little later, in the 1962 painting "Large Trademark With Eight Spotlights," he painted the production logo of 20th Century Fox, its letters and numerals appearing to be projected from the picture's bottom right corner. It's been cunningly installed here in view of Ruscha's similarly triangular compositions of gas stations, streamlined and stylized into American oases. The angles culminate in the isometric isolation of "Los Angeles County Museum of Art on Fire" (1965-68), though I've always found that one overrated and redundant: the words and gas stations are their own, cooler acts of arson.

The other breakthrough of that early European trip was serial photography. In Cannes in 1961 he'd used his Yashica camera to shoot film posters on the Croisette, and back in the U.S. the next year, he brought that lightweight point-and-shoot on a drive from L.A. back home to Oklahoma. He photographed the service stations along the way from a flat, neutral position, and printed them in a book of his own design. If you're looking for the romance of Route 66, I suggest you stick with "Easy Rider." Ruscha's "Twentysix Gasoline Stations" (1963, and hold the hyphen) boiled down the American landscape from a dream to just evidence, and the book presented a threatening detachment, maybe a bit like industrial documentation or the manuals of the military.

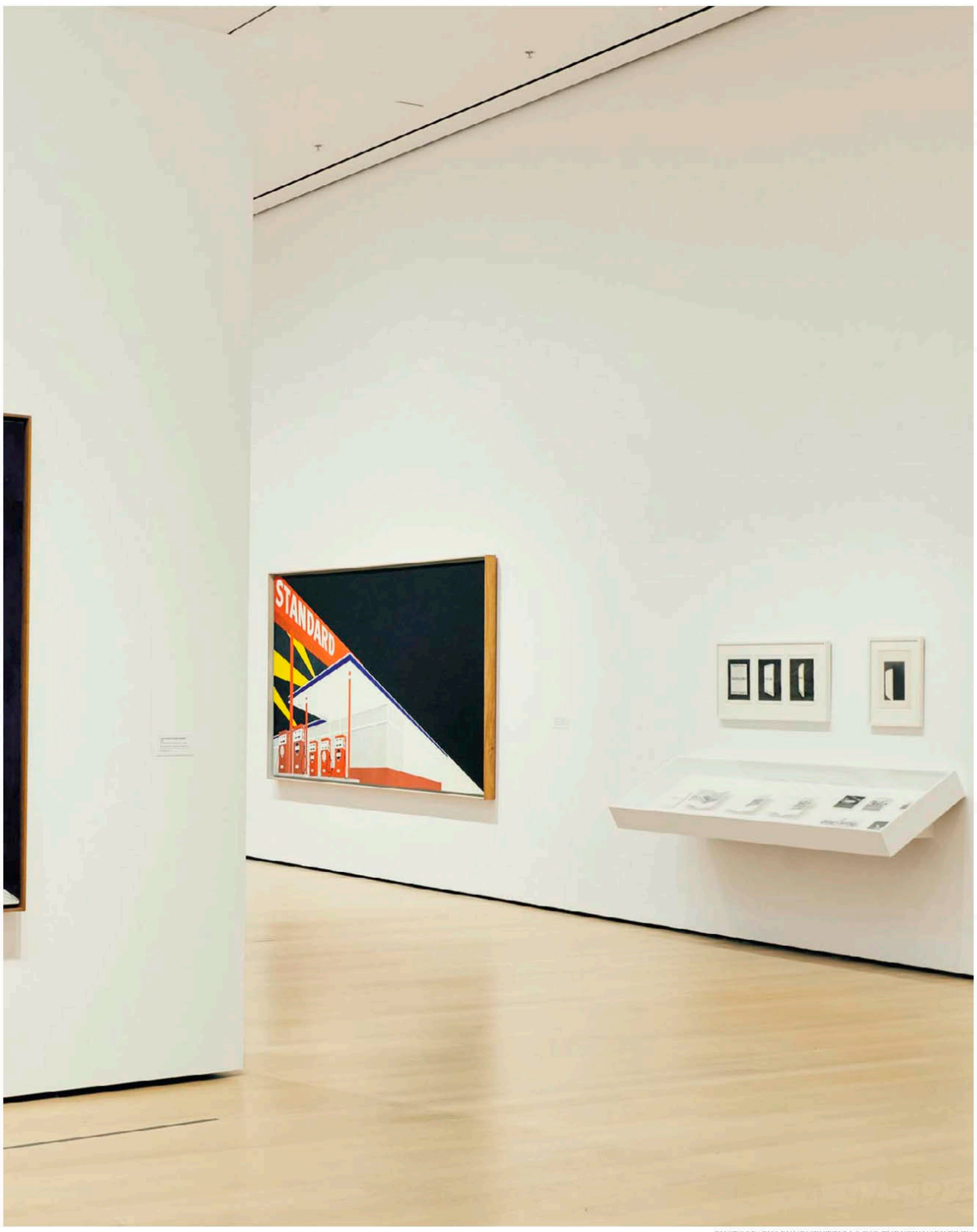
Twenty-six: the whole span of 'em, from A to Z. The gas stations are mundane glyphs in an automotive alphabet, read west to east like an English sentence. (Cherix has trusted visitors to flip through a copy, which dangles from the ceiling on a 12-foot fish wire. Don't steal it!) Subsequent L.A. photo books — especially the accordion-printed "Every Building on the Sunset Strip" (1966), stretching 25 feet — would double down on the dispassion, recording the city with the same putative impartiality (but in fact deep authorship) that Google Street View would introduce four decades later.

In the later 1960s Ruscha began experimenting with unusual inks and pigment sources, staining his canvases with rose petals, chewing tobacco, his own blood. Bleached gunpowder, he discovered, allowed him to draw more finely and erase more cleanly than graphite; the combustible dust resolved into gossamer ribbons spelling out "Fire," or "Sin," or "Quit." Screenprints with the Old English legends "Mews," "News" and "Pews" were made with substrates that MoMA's labels discreetly call "organic": salmon roe, Hershey's syrup, and even a Bolognese.

Yet except for the "Chocolate Room" — a rare installation of Ruscha's, more mouth-watering than mind-altering — the organic materials did not make a show of themselves. And unlike Bruce Nauman, another Midwestern boy made good in California, Ruscha did not dwell in puns and never dipped into irony. His painted and drawn words retained their meaning, but they got thinned and thickened by American commerce: a metaphor he made literal by painting "Annie," "Adios" or "Rancho" with letters like trompe-l'oeil liquids. The words seem to be formed of maple syrup (slow) or gasoline (fast). The letters appear to run and reform. Do words have fixed senses, or are they empty signs? Neither, exactly; their meanings always slip from their constituent consonants and vowels, drip, puddle, cling to the roof of your mouth.

By the 1970s Ruscha was using pastels to paint longer, more lapidary phrases and sentences: I LIVE OVER IN VALLEY VIEW, or FIND CONTACT LENS AT BOTTOM OF SWIMMING POOL. To be precise, he painted the negatives of these sentences; masking the sheet with stencil letters, he coated the remainder with misty fields of aquamarine and canary yellow. It's a treat to see them here — Ruscha's hand-painted backgrounds of the '60s and '70s photograph very badly — yet they aren't dreamy, in the manner of Color Field paintings. Instead they have the commercial consistency of product photography, or, more recently, the soft gradient filters of the latest cameraphones.

Only in the 1980s would Ruscha consent to pick up a spray gun, in large-scale, word-free grisailles of an elephant climbing a hill, or two ships tossed at sea. Yet they didn't sit



PHOTOGRAPHS BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

easily amid an '80s-era revival of figurative painting. The ships might as well have been SHIPS, the elephant an ELEPHANT. The backgrounds sometimes had the tears and scratches of a celluloid reel, such as in a large painting of 1991 that stutters "The End."

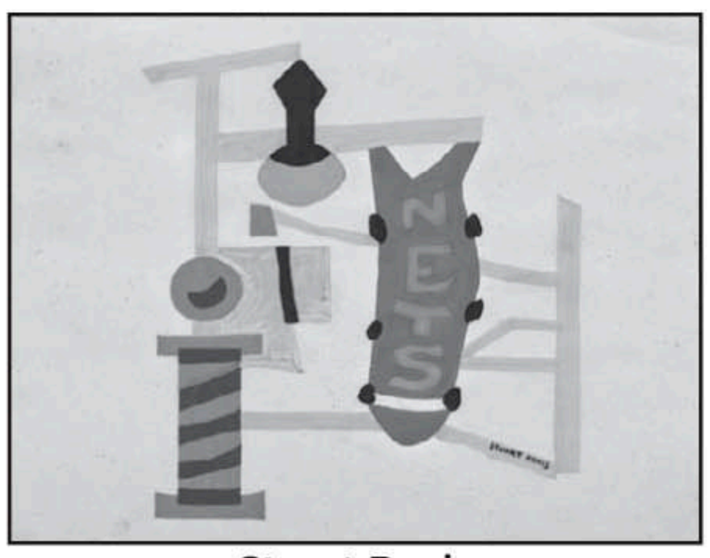
In the early 1990s, using the same isometric format and panoramic dimensions he once applied to LACMA's burning galleries, Ruscha painted a suite of imagined industrial warehouses, again in black and white. Yet in 2005, at the height of the Iraq War, he debuted a rejoinder: paintings of those same buildings, at the same size, but now in color and seemingly in ruin. Together, the '90s paintings and the new ones became a cycle of American decadence named "Course of Empire," after Thomas Cole's five-painting series of the rise and fall of an ancient city-state. But Ruscha's vision has no middle steps. Dead/alive. On/off. Now/then.

I'm skeptical of Ruscha's more direct American engagements, which lack the metaphysical ambiguity of his words and phrases, and I have very little patience for recent works like "Our Flag," a panorama of a frayed Stars and Stripes he painted in Trump Year One. The best of Ruscha's works this century depict mountain ranges topped with snow, overlaid with new phrases — PAY NOTHING UNTIL APRIL — and gruff obituaries: CLARENCE JONES / 1906-1987 / REALLY KNEW HOW TO SHARPEN KNIVES. Like the Color Field-but-not-really gradients of his youth, these Rocky Mountain backdrops only play at the Romantic sublime. They are as artificial, as mythological, as the gas stations and the gunpowder. This is the manifest destiny that led to the Hollywood backlot.

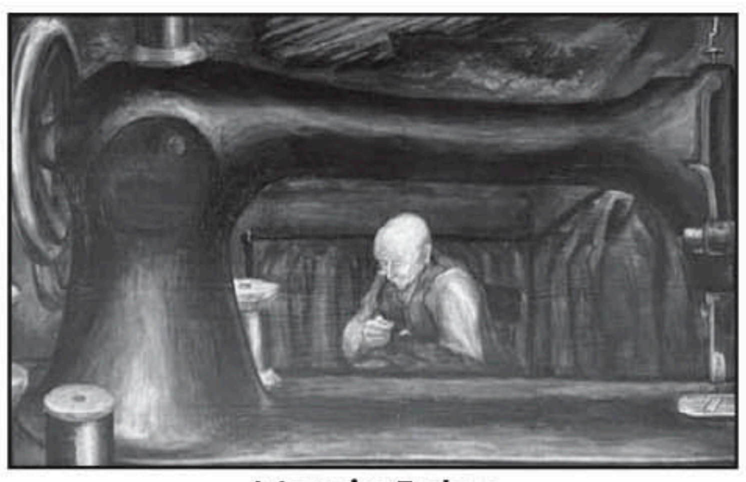
Back in 1971, Ruscha wrote a text called "The Information Man," a short parable that, though half a century old, seems directly addressed to young artists lost today in space and screen. "It would be nice," the story begins, "if sometime a man would come up to me on the street and say 'Hello, I'm the information man and you have not said the word 'yours' for 12 minutes.'" The Information Man informs Ruscha of the locations of all his photo books: "2,026 are in vertical positions in libraries, while 2,715 are under books in stacks . . . . 7 have been used as swatters to kill small insects such as flies and mosquitoes . . . ."

Like "OOF," like "Pay Nothing Until April," the story of the Information Man was as profound as it was mundane, and it suggested how to create something meaningful in a culture grown quicker, lighter, searchable, ephemeral. The Information Man knows photos don't stay put in books, but are sources of metadata. The Information Man quantifies your utterances, your memories and your dreams, and extracts what value he can. The Information Man — have we all become Information Men? — distills word and image into 0s and 1s, overlaid and transmitted as fast as a meme can fly. But a meme is just more data, blinkered and bastardized; one thing that cannot be information is a work of art.

NEW EXHIBITION
A RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY
1930s AMERICAN ART



Stuart Davis



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Freshmen Again, With a Screwball Curriculum

In 'Tiny Toons Looniversity,' updated characters from a 1990s series return to college.

By LAUREL GRAEBER

First-year college students everywhere are now adjusting to campus life. Few, however, have to choose between classes like Banana Peel Placement and Whoopie Cushion Alternatives. Or suffer the crash of anvils on their heads when they give wrong answers. Or petition for a change in roommates by arm-wrestling the dean.

These experiences belong exclusively to the incoming freshmen of "Tiny Toons Looniversity," a new animated series that begins streaming on Friday on Max and airing on Saturday on Cartoon Network. With Steven Spielberg as an executive producer, the show revives the characters and setting of the Emmy Award-winning early-90s series "Tiny Toon Adventures," whose own comic DNA descended from the "Looney Tunes" short films of the 1930s-60s.

When "Adventures" debuted in 1990, it had a rich conceit: A fresh generation of young toons was enrolling at Acme Looniversity, a kind of Hogwarts of hilarity, where they would learn from distinguished professors like Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and Wile E. Coyote. Now Warner Bros. and Spielberg's Amblin Television — the same partners that revived the "Looney Tunes"-inspired "Animaniacs" series three years ago — are escorting the core freshman five of Babs and Buster Bunny, Plucky Duck, Hamton J. Pig and Sweetie Bird back to campus. They haven't aged, but they've acquired more dimensions.

The successfully reimagined "Animaniacs" "helped us get the momentum to do our show, but also do it in a different way," Nate Cash, a showrunner of "Looniversity" whose main focus is animation and production, said in a video call. The new series is not "as referential and adult as 'Animaniacs,'" he added. "We're going just for the straight, fun wackiness of old cartoons."

Spielberg, long a fan of the "Looney Tunes" repertory, set a high bar, Cash said, even requesting that Plucky Duck spew more spittle during his motormouth lisping. The goal of such silliness is to draw in children ages 6 to 11, though the showrunners also hope that the series appeals "to their parents, or just adults who grew up on the original show that are looking for a nostalgia fix," Cash said.

"Looniversity," however, which has already been ordered for two seasons, aims to be more than just a reboot of a reboot. Instead of featuring short comic sketches like "Adventures" or "Animaniacs," the new series devotes each half-hour episode to one central story. This format has allowed the writers to introduce more inter-toon dynamics and complicated plots. And in choosing to focus more on the five central characters than on the huge population of "Adventures," the "Tiny Toons Looniversity" creative team brought in a new cast of lead voice actors — all fans, the stars said, of the original series.

Cash said that the comedian Erin Gibson, the series's other showrunner, also wanted "Looniversity" to be more grounded in the toons' classes and campus than its predecessor. The "Adventures" theme song now has new lyrics, and the episodes explore relationship and identity struggles that are familiar to children but places those conflicts in an educational environment that parents will recognize. (Gibson, who oversees the writers' room, declined to be interviewed because of the continuing writers' strike.)

"Erin pitched it as 'the Harvard of stupid,'" Sam Register, president of Warner Bros. Animation and Cartoon Network Studios, said of "Looniversity." And that, he added, "has been our mantra throughout."

The college emphasis allows "Looniversity" to mine an inherent tension as well, Register said. Following something of a trend — witness Xavier's school in the X-Men movies, Wednesday Addams's Nevermore Academy and Godolkin University in the coming series "Gen V" — the show proves that trying to educate supernaturally gifted beings offers plenty of dramatic (and comic) potential.

"How do you put structure around the zany antics of animated characters?" Register said. "There's something about those things playing against each other that we love."

The longer stories and retooled setting have also allowed the series's creators to focus on something rare in the classic cartoon universe: character arcs. "Looniversity" puts the five main toons in situations that lead to self-awareness and changed perspectives. In another shift, it has transformed Babs and Buster from a 1990s flirty couple into close-knit contemporary twins.

"I think maybe a younger audience doesn't want to see cartoons making out," Cash said. But, more important, he added, giving these characters a family history lets the show's developers — the writer and actress Alison Becker ("Parks and Recreation") is a story editor — delve into more facets of their lives.

It means "more adventure for Babs and Buster while they're going off to college," said Ashleigh Hairston, who voices Babs. She added that young viewers could expect "sibling moments all throughout the series."

Gibson also gave "Looniversity" a feminist spin. Whereas Babs in "Adventures" lamented the lack of a faculty role model — the original "Looney Tunes" world is decidedly masculine — Gibson has introduced Lola Bunny (from the film "Space Jam") as the university's prizewinning chef and has anointed the Looney character Granny, a nurse in "Adventures," as the motorcycle mama who is the university dean.

And Sweetie Bird has gone from what Cash called "a one-note character" in "Adventures" to a diminutive dynamo with a punk attitude and a determination to destroy the patriarchy.

"Erin pitched the reboot of her character as being a mix of Ronda Rousey" — the mixed-martial-arts fighter — "and Gloria Steinem," he said.

Hamton J. Pig has also evolved, but not to subvert sexism. He has gained a Porky Pig-type stutter (a show writer who had grown up stammering insisted on this, Cash said) and an ambition to transfer to medical school. (Toons apparently don't need a college degree first.)

A sensitive soul, Hamton wants to become a doctor to treat all the toons who have been born with a genetic anomaly: Their DNA does not allow them to bounce back into shape after being crushed by an anvil, blown to smithereens, run off a cliff, etc.

"I think it's a really neat take on an element of the mythology, right?" said David Errigo Jr., who voices Hamton and the narcissistic Plucky Duck. "You pick it out, and you go: 'OK, why can toons do this? And what happens if they can't?'"

The new series's approach, though, hasn't caused the characters to lose their essential Looniness. "Looniversity" features several "Adventures" voice actors reprising their original faculty roles, including Bob Bergen as Porky Pig, Candi Milo as Granny and Jeff Bergman as Bugs Bunny. It leans unabashedly into its cartoon violence, and more than one actor mentioned taking every opportunity to dial up a character's reactions to emotional stress.

Eric Bauza, who voices Buster Bunny and Daffy Duck, explained that if he gave Gibson three deliveries of a line, she would usually choose "the loud, obnoxious crazy take." (He demonstrated gleefully in his Buster persona.)

"It makes sense," Bauza added, because this Looniversity class is trying to uphold the standards of "their wacky mentors, that being the Looney Tunes."

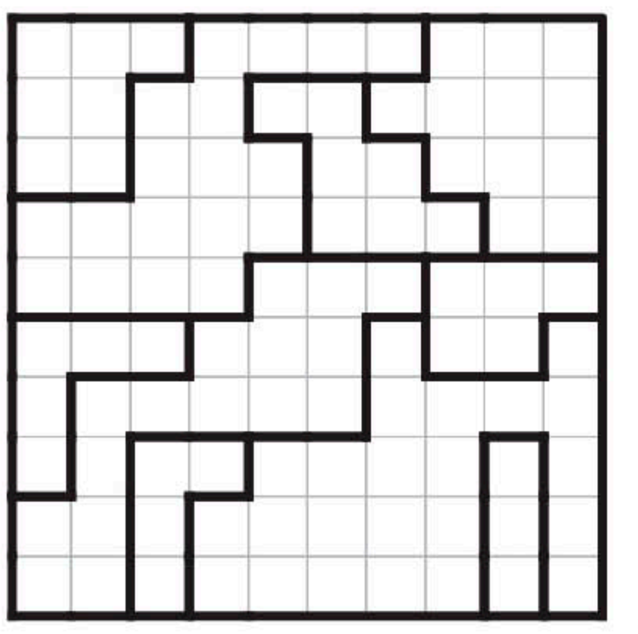
But if "Looniversity" favors cartoon mayhem over the educational curriculums and developmental goals of so many animated children's series, it still offers its young audience guidance in the tricky world of relationships.

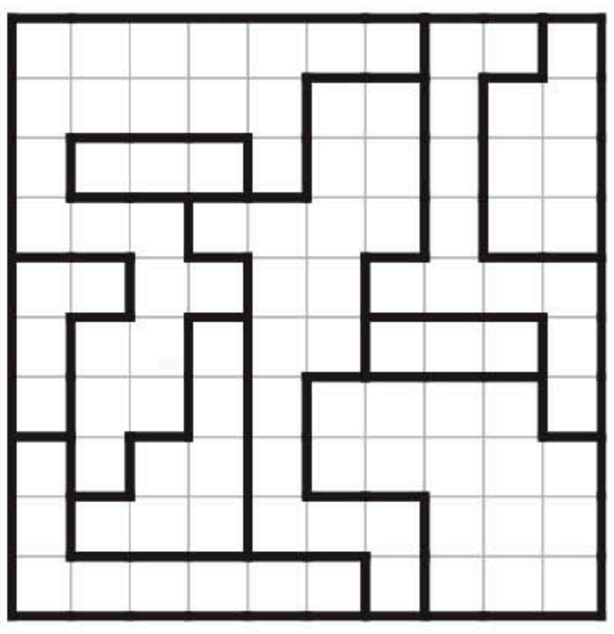
"Compared to the original 'Tiny Toons,' the biggest difference to me with this show is that it really focuses on friendship," said Tessa Netting, who voices Sweetie Bird. In the midst of campus antics, she added, "there's something special about, like, finding your people, about, like, not being afraid to be yourself. There's this joy there. And I really think that the show captures that joy."

IMAGES VIA WARNER BROS. ANIMATION

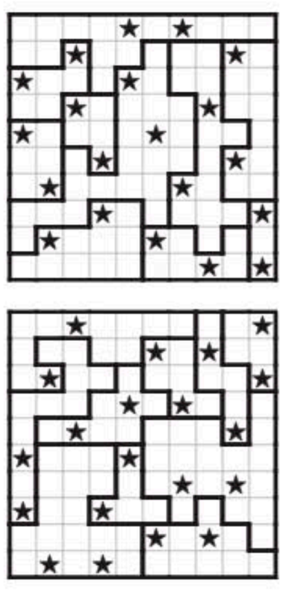
Top, from left, Sweetie Bird, Babs Bunny, Plucky Duck, Buster Bunny and Hamton J. Pig are freshmen in "Tiny Toons Looniversity." Above, Daffy Duck, one of their instructors, demonstrates proper anvil etiquette.

Two Not Touch





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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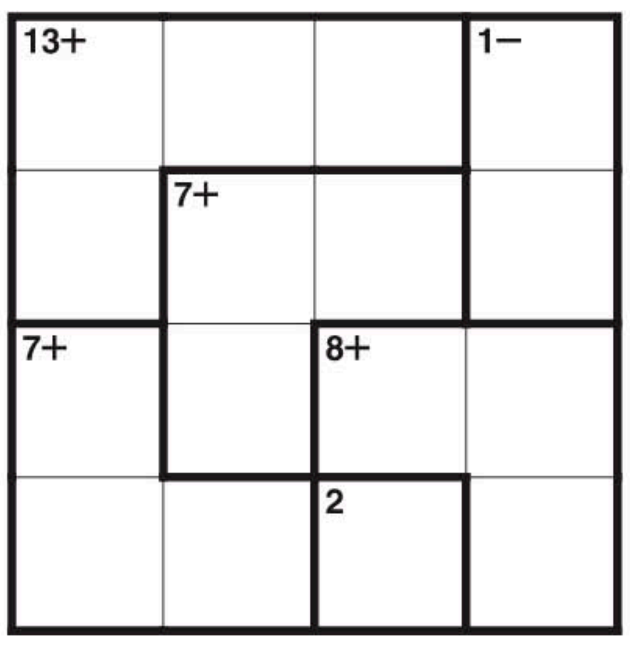
Brain Tickler

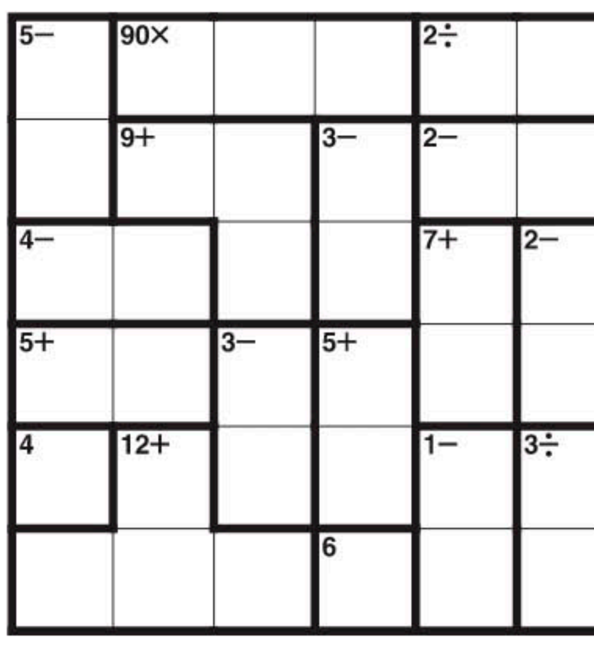
What two-syllable word meaning "amazing" can have its syllables exchanged to sound like a new word meaning "follow"?

PUZZLE BY WILL SHORTZ

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER My new sweater created static electricity. The store let me get another one free of charge.

KenKen





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

2	1	4	3
4	2	3	1
3	4	1	2
1	3	2	4

2	6	5	3	4	1
1	3	2	6	5	4
3	1	4	2	6	5
5	4	6	1	3	2
6	5	1	4	2	3
4	2	3	5	1	6

Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

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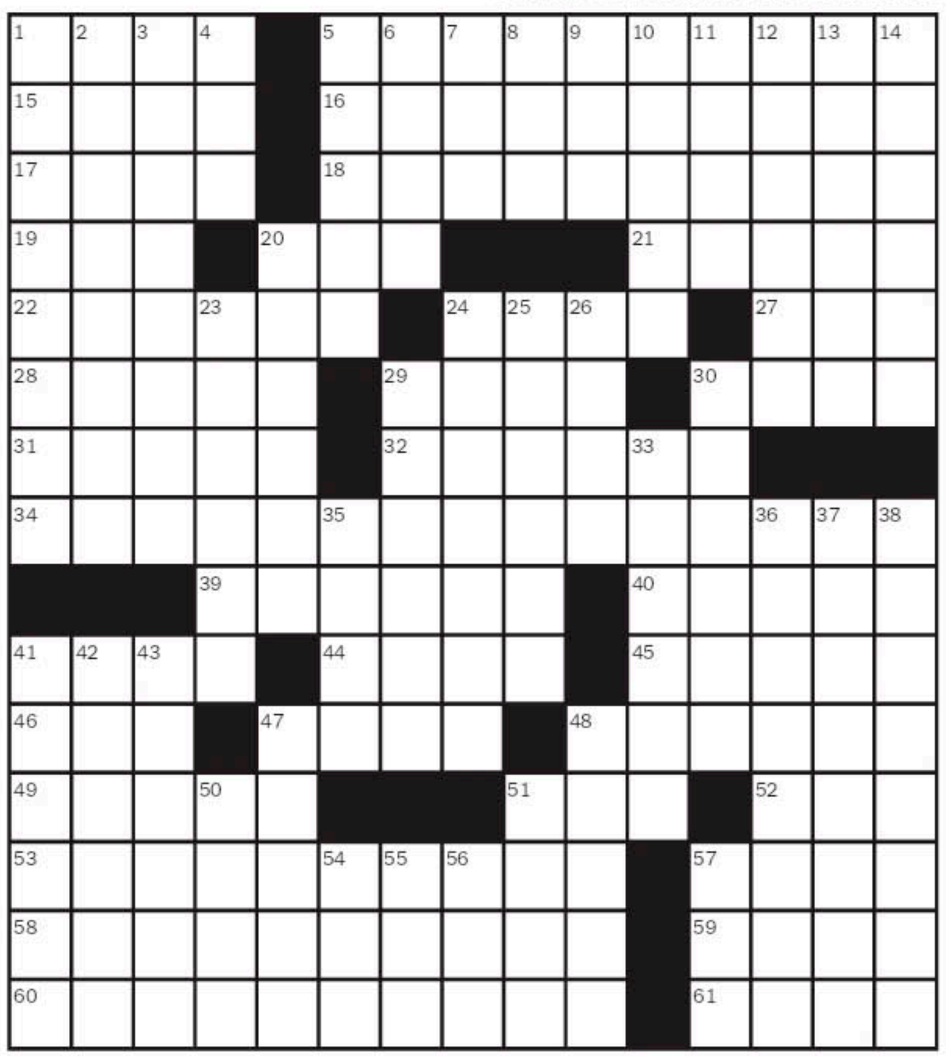
Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY RACHEL FABI AND KEN STERN



9/8/23

ACROSS

1 Grouch
5 Unintelligible
15 Portrayer of Paolo Gucci in 2021's "House of Gucci"
16 Pasta whose name derives from the Italian for "little cakes"
17 Regarding
18 Ones getting some dinner "specials"
19 ___ hours
20 Seeing red
21 Olympians score points with their points
22 Beyhive, for Beyoncé, or ARMY, for BTS
24 Skip it!
27 "'Fraid not, laddie"
28 Alphabetize, e.g.
29 ___ Men, 2000 Grammy winners for Best Dance Recording
30 Always at the drugstore?
31 "How inappropriate to call this planet Earth when clearly it is ___": Arthur C. Clarke
32 Torrent
34 It's awful, awful, awful
39 "Not quite yet"
40 Tail off, as a storm
41 German swimmer Kristin, who won six gold medals at the Seoul Olympics
44 Their contracts may be board-certified, in brief
45 Pulled behind
46 Identity for someone who may prefer platonic relationships, informally
47 Alphabetize, e.g.
48 Swinger at a burlesque show
49 Word with set, put or "and so"
51 Longtime weekly companion of Ebony magazine
52 Return specialist, for short
53 Seal of approval
57 "Little piggies"
58 One-a-day, for Dunaway
59 Remains here?
60 Led a difficult team, metaphorically
61 X, as in Ximenes?

DOWN

1 With 57-Down, old-fashioned bathroom fixture
2 Fact-check, e.g.
3 One who's coming and going
4 Scare quote?
5 J.V. benchwarmers
6 Bundle
7 Go off
8 Hartsfield-Jackson airport code
9 Margret and H. A. ___, co-authors of the "Curious George" books
10 "Three Tall Women" playwright
11 Indulge in a former vice ... for this once
12 Hormonal IUD available since 2000
13 Zombielike
14 Puts down
20 "Nice to see ya today!"
23 "What's the ___?"
24 Rampaged
25 "Well, darn it!"
26 Apostle with many epistles
29 Singer with the #1 hits "Sorry" and "Love Yourself"
30 Moon that orbits Mars about three times each Martian day
33 Attempt to smush, as a fly
35 It may be ordered al pastor
36 Figure that's not weighted
37 Becomes increasingly inclined
38 TV character who said "Heck, you could fill two internets with what I don't know about football"
41 Clumsy
42 ___ l'oeil
43 Sluggishness
47 You might take one to a new friend
48 Provisions
50 Stomped (on)
51 Word that can make a big ask seem smaller
54 Rx pickup
55 Bow
56 Aunt, in Acapulco
57 See 1-Down

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

I	R	O	B	O	T		P	I	N	E		H	A	L
R	O	M	E	R	O		E	D	E	N		A	M	O
A	I	G	E	N	E	R	A	T	E	D		S	I	R
			F	E	D	O	R	A	S		B	A	S	E
S	A	T	Y	R		A	L	G	O	R	I	T	H	M
T	E	E		Y	T	D			N	A	G			
E	S	T	A		A	H	O	K		G	O	T	Y	A
W	O	R	L	D	D	O	M	I	N	A	T	I	O	N
S	P	A	D	E		G	A	R	B		S	T	U	D
			E	L	I			S	A	O		A	N	S
N	E	U	R	A	L	N	E	T		D	I	N	G	O
I	M	P	S		D	E	L	E	T	E	D			
N	E	O		T	U	R	I	N	G	T	E	S	T	S
J	E	N		O	C	T	O		I	T	A	L	I	A
A	T	E		V	E	S	T		F	E	L	O	N	Y

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